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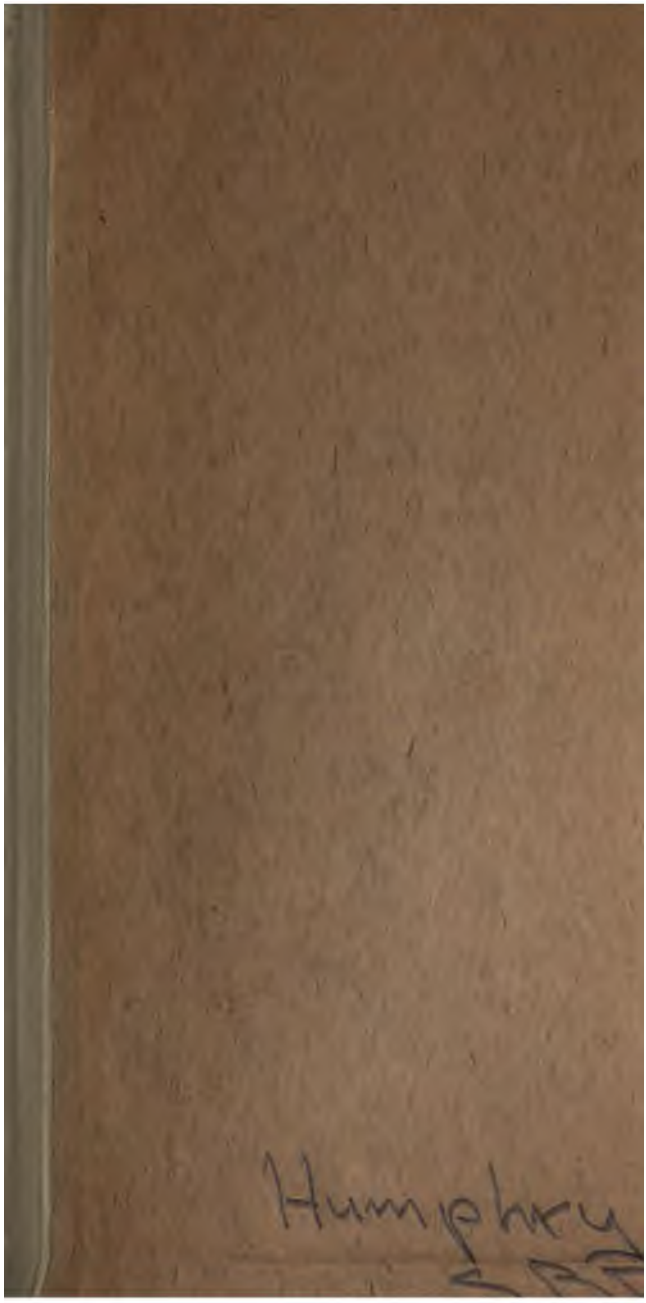
Humphry

MANNERS FOR GIRLS

BY MRS. HUMPHRY
("MADGE" OF *TRUTH*)
AUTHOR OF
"BEAUTY ADORNED," ETC.

London
T. FISHER UNWIN
PATERNOSTER SQUARE
1901

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MANNERS FOR GIRLS

I

OUR DAUGHTERS

IT used to be the custom to keep girls under seventeen quite shut away from all society, except that of their youthful companions. They looked forward to Christmas time as affording their only chance of joining the grown-ups at a dance or party, and often longed to be older in order to 'have more fun,' as they expressed it.

But now they have but little to complain of in that respect. Quite young girls are allowed to dine late with the family, instead of being found in the drawing-room with the governess when the elders return to it after dinner. Girls of fifteen or sixteen are allowed to join river parties, garden parties, and other entertainments from which old-fashioned mothers would carefully exclude them until after they had 'come out'; and in a score of other ways the schoolgirl merges into the 'young lady.'

The woman of to-day believes

thoroughly in allowing her daughters to catch a glimpse in a very small way of social functions some years before they finally make their *début*, so that many times an informal dinner is given purely for this purpose. By the time they are ready to enter the world of fashion they are splendidly equipped as regards that never-failing attraction, good manners.

This greatly conduces to self-possession, a quality that is not exactly inconsistent with shyness, but rather helps to conceal it. Shyness is such a torment to girls that one cannot but view with approbation anything that tends to free them from it. At the same time, the very young girl in Society has been rather overdone of late.

A young girl is like a sheet of white paper. A good or bad impression is made according to the society she is in, according to the methods of her bringing-up, according to the manners she sees around her, according to the example given her, for by that does she profit. We all know that in one family there may be a number of daughters, and each one entirely different, yet when all are gathered together, and if the mother possess the cardinal virtue known as good manners, they are pretty sure to be a nice set of girls, who will shine anywhere when the time comes for bringing them out.

A girl should have repose of

manner, politeness, courtesy, good breeding, and, above all, a *savoir faire* which will make her above all ordinary women. All these qualities are her great attraction at home and abroad.

Etiquette in all its phases applies especially to women, because therein lies the better knowledge of the graceful lines in life; and nowadays the young woman finished in education and complete in all the details of social usages is one to be looked on with envy. To be without this knowledge of manners is tantamount to an acknowledgment that the girl's early life has been spent without refining social influences; but a perfectly finished manner sits ill upon a fresh young girl, whose ingenuousness disappears under too much experience for her years.

I once knew a family where contradiction reigned supreme; where, if the mother asserted herself in any one direction, either in telling an incident or expressing her opinion as to family details, she was met with a volley:

'Oh, no, it was not that way'; or 'Mother, you are quite mistaken,' so that it became downright rudeness.

Girls should make it a rule to be as polite to the mother or sister as they would to a stranger. This is quite apart from standing on ceremony. Rude contradiction or unnecessary corrections are always irritating, and must be avoided by the girl who

wishes to be all she should be in the home.

In the amenities of life what a host of rules can be given to the girl visitor —the young woman who is booked for a week at a house-party, or asked for a ten days' visit to a country house in the early summer. A pretty, clever, amiable girl is always an agreeable guest, so that each season she is claimed for a fortnight or so in the same household. A literary woman once wrote a small book on etiquette, in which she said: 'When visiting, never be late at meals. If an affair happens in the house of an unpleasant character, heed it not. Never interfere with, nor give an order to, the servants, and, above all things, never correct the children of your hostess—mothers resent this. Always express a willingness to retire at the family bedtime, and make yourself generally agreeable.

'Recollect never to extend your visit beyond the limit set in your invitation. Never ask questions of a private nature, nor permit yourself to monopolise conversation at the table. Always recollect that your evenings belong to your host and hostess, and that you are expected to add to their enjoyment, as all well-mannered guests should. If you are asked to go to church, do so; it is a courtesy to conform to the rules of the house. If asked to ride, accept with pleasure, even if you leave in the drawing-room

the most agreeable companion of the party.

'Be ready at all times to sacrifice yourself for your hostess. After the midday meal is over, go to your room, read, write, sleep, or do what you choose. A hostess should have the privilege of retiring, and not be made to entertain a guest at all hours of the daylight. By being careful of your hostess and her duties, you will gain a reward tenfold in her estimation.'

This is good advice, is it not? There is such a difference in girls when visiting at their friends' houses. Some of them become absorbed in flirtations, and are never available for any purposes of recreation apart from that pastime. Such a girl is a terrible weight upon a hostess's hands, and a responsibility as well. She will probably never be invited again to the particular house where she has so distinguished herself.

But there are other girls who are always ready to fall in with any plan that may be made for them, and who do not allow selfishness to interfere with the comfort and convenience of others. These are the girls who are always in demand. Their invitations increase in warmth and number with every summer and autumn, and, when they marry, their husbands find themselves introduced to a score or so of agreeable families where the young wife has made herself a favourite and a valued friend.

II

GIRLS AWAY FROM HOME

WHEN girls go away from home on visits to the country, some of them leaving their mothers for the first time, they feel just a little at a loss now and then, like a chick when it gets separated from its mother hen. Girls, when they first come out, feel safer at home, but at the same time there is an agreeable feeling of adventure in going on a visit, and feeling that they have to depend upon themselves and on their own quality of self-reliance. There are moments when they heartily wish themselves at home again—inevitable moments when they miss the mother-warmth from their immediate world. But it is very good for the young things to be out on their own account, and to acquire that strength that comes of having no one to lean on.

A little advice on a few points may not be amiss. There are mothers who actually train their own daughters to be as selfish as possible. At home they do all they can to avert everything disagreeable from them, and indulge them in every possible

way. This is bad training for the world and its rubs. The girl whose mother has made it a practice to spare her every exertion, and who has encouraged her in self-indulgence, is apt to feel herself distinctly at a disadvantage when she goes on a visit. She has certain sharp lessons to learn, and it would have been far better to teach them to her gently and gradually at home. There she has been accustomed to take, as a matter of course, the most comfortable seat in every room she enters. If she wishes to read she reads, regardless of the other persons in the room. If she wants to talk she talks, even if others have to lay down their books or papers in order to listen to her. If she is bored, she yawns; if excited, she laughs and sings.

This is all very well when she is at home, where the inmates of the house are accustomed to her egoistic ways. But when she is on a visit it is a different matter. Possibly the daughter of the house may have the same little ways, taught her by an injudicious mother.

The result of that visit will not be all roses. Far from it! Each girl will certainly accuse the other of selfishness. They may not do so openly—most certainly will not if they are at all well bred; but a certain amount of friction is bound to ensue.

The girl who is not spoiled in her

home life is pretty sure to be popular on a visit. She is obliging without being officious—there is no greater bore in a house than your officious girl or woman—and is content to be fairly comfortable without seizing upon the best of everything or ostentatiously effacing herself, the two extremes of bad manners.

Some girls seem to emulate the humility of Uriah Heep. They sit down somewhere near the door, and seem afraid to help themselves to a slice of bread-and-butter until someone invites them to do so. A little experience of the world soon shows them that this excess of self-depreciation on the part of a visitor is almost as troublesome to a hostess as the opposite extreme.

'My daughter can always look thoroughly after herself,' said a lady once, speaking of a married daughter who had gone to stay in Ireland with rather a rackety family, hospitable indeed, but rather careless of the minor comforts of their guests. The mother was correct in her estimate of the child she had trained. The *châtelaine* of Castle Kilsomething wrote to a friend: 'Our dear cousin resented openly our unpunctual ways, actually complaining of them just as though the castle had been a hotel. In fact, she behaved as if she were in a hotel, ordering what she wanted of the servants, and even sending them to the village on messages without

consulting me as to whether it was convenient or not to spare them to go a couple of miles and back.'

In a postscript she wrote: 'By the way, is it no longer considered necessary to put on the envelopes "care of" the master of the house? It was regarded as indispensable when I was a girl, but now several of our lively visitors from London have this detail omitted on their letters. Harry (her husband) says he thinks that the impression must have got abroad that we are keeping a sort of private hotel, and that our visitors are merely "paying guests."'

It really does seem as though the good old rule of politeness, to acknowledge the existence of one's host on one's letters, is fast falling into disuse. It is a rushing, careless age, and some of the flowers of old-world courtesy get trodden down in the bustle and crowding of life.

In every sitting-room — house-agents always call them 'reception-rooms'—in a house there is always one seat sacred to the hostess. It is usually the best in the room, and it is quite right that it should be so. It is near the fire and commands the door. Could there possibly be a worse breach of good manners than for any guest, but more especially one younger than the hostess, to take it? And yet some girls are so ill-bred as habitually to do so, whenever they get the chance. In such cases the

daughter of the house is quite justified in saying, 'That is my mother's seat; let me draw up this chair for you,' or something to the same effect, which combines politeness to the guest with a due consideration for the lady of the house.

Sometimes a visitor, intent on her own comfort, deliberately takes her hostess's chair and thinks she has done all that is necessary by saying, 'I'm afraid I am taking your seat, Mrs So-and-so.' She takes it, all the same. For how can poor Mrs So-and-so reply, 'Yes, you are.'

It is in ways like this that the girl-guest shows of what stuff she is made, and also what sort of training she has had at home.

She must always remember that hospitality prevents a hostess from speaking openly of her own likes and dislikes, lest the knowledge of them might interfere with the enjoyment of her guests. Consequently, the visitor should be on the look-out for the least sign of disinclination or otherwise, in order to be guided as to the wishes of her entertainer.

Some time ago a girl was on a visit at a house in London, and she expressed a wish to visit a church where the service was very high, ritualistic to an extreme degree. No one made reply to this remark. The silence must have been enough to prove that the suggestion had met with no favour whatever. But when the Sunday came,

the girl returned to the charge and carried her point. She went to the church in question, and was accompanied by one of the ladies of the house, who went in defiance of her own religious principles but could not permit her youthful guest to go alone. This was one of those victories that really mean defeat. That girl had her way in the matter. True. But she will never be invited to that house again.

There are girls who are never taught at home to shut doors quietly. When they are on a visit to a well-ordered house, where all noise is avoided, they are really a dreadful nuisance. Instead of taking hold of the door-handles and gently withdrawing the latch, and sending it quietly home again, they bang every door through which they pass in a manner that is destructive to the nerves of all who are within hearing. Careful mistresses, who have trained their servants to shut all doors noiselessly, find that such a visitor exercises a most demoralising effect upon her household. Doors are banged downstairs as well as up. There are few things more infectious than noise.

III

THE DÉBUTANTE

EIGHTEEN is the accepted age at which a girl makes her first appearance in the world. Not till then is her education supposed to be finished, or, rather, so far carried on that she may continue it herself. It is a mistake to let a girl 'come out' too early. Eighteen is quite soon enough. Byron called the girl of seventeen a 'bread-and-butter miss,' and she is, in many ways, a callow fledgling.

The judicious mother will let her girl of seventeen have some few fleeting glimpses of the great world of Society, in order that when she really emerges from the safe seclusion of the schoolroom she may not feel utterly lost and bewildered. Late dinner will be brightened by the presence of the bright young creature when there is no dinner-party, but perhaps two or three friends. She then learns how to take her part in that strange thing called 'conversation,' a bandying about of empty nothings, but nevertheless an art to be acquired, like another.

She may feel slightly astonished

that real people do not talk like those in books that she has read, and that having nothing to say is no bar against saying something. Any nonsense answers the purpose, so long as it is in good taste.

Lugubrious topics must always be avoided. It is necessary to mention this, for some girls have a fine taste in horrors.

In other ways a girl needs preliminary training. She has to practise how to stand, how to sit, what to do with her hands, how to walk in long skirts (especially upstairs!), and, during the last few months of her seventeenth year, how to do her hair in a transitionary style so that it is neither schoolgirlishly arranged nor quite in a grown-up manner.

It is delicious to watch the bright young creature making all these pretty preparations for appearing in what looks to her a rose-coloured world. Nor must the elders, looking on, wax morbid over the disappointment and sorrows that may turn the rose to grey, and cloud the brightness. For some lives are chiefly sunshine. What does Owen Meredith say?

> 'The world, that knows itself too sad,
> Is proud to keep some faces glad.'

One sees these serene and happy faces on into old age, sometimes. They reconcile some of us to the world, with which we may have been

inclined to pick a quarrel, after the fashion of Portia, when she said:

My little body is aweary of this great world.'

The art of listening is one of the most difficult for a girl to learn. She is, naturally enough, rather occupied with her own concerns at so momentous a period of her life, and it is hard for her to concentrate her attention on the prosy talk of some bore of either sex. And yet it has to be achieved in some way or other. The quiet attitude, restful and attentive, the look quite free from preoccupation, and the impression conveyed that the person speaking is, for the moment, the most interesting in the world, are not compassed in a day, any more than the great city of Rome.

And very often one of the rewards of a perfect listener is that the bores, who cannot get anyone else to pay the slightest attention to their discourse, fasten upon her like leeches. However, one of her accomplishments to be developed later will be that of gently shaking off the practised bore, and this needs rather more *savoir faire* and social skill than can usually be found in a girl of eighteen.

Even if the good listener has to spend some hours of boredom she may gain something from them in reflecting that she has been giving great pleasure to persons who are not always granted the boon of hearing

themselves talk, and that she is getting good practice in patience and those indispensable social qualities of fortitude and endurance that caused Carlyle to style the English aristocracy 'amiable stoics.' Incapable himself, except for very limited periods when associating with the well born, of those endless acts of self-denial that go to make good manners, he admired all the more that very quality in the cultivated society to which his genius gained him admittance.

When to shake hands and when to refrain from doing so forms another branch of the *débutante*'s social training. Also, how to shake hands! How expressive is the hand-clasp bestowed upon us by our acquaintance! And how various! Some of them take our fingers in a limp fashion, and drop them immediately as though thankful to get the business over. Others give us such a squeeze as to drive the rings into our flesh and make us thankful, in our turn, when the violent greeting is finished.

Others, again, follow the changing fashion in hand-shakes, sometimes lifting our fingers high in air, and bestowing upon them a quaint little twirl. A few do not shake hands at all, or very rarely. I must admit a certain sympathy with these. There is far too much hand-shaking in the world.

And far too much unmeaning kissing! Why do girls kiss each time

they meet? However friendly may be their feelings, the day soon comes when a change passes over them, even if only temporarily. Then a kiss becomes a task, a bore, if not a falsehood, even a betrayal.

Why kiss so much? Let us begin to give it up. A friendly smile is worth a score of kisses among girls. There is even something undignified in perpetual osculation. Let it be reserved for special occasions, such as meeting after long parting or saying farewell for a long time. There is no sense in kissing when the same lips repeat the caress a dozen times a day to half as many friends. This robs it of all meaning.

Leave kissing to lovers and heart-dear friends. Do not fritter it on everybody.

In the same way hand-shaking should be not too general. When a new acquaintance is introduced a bow suffices, supplemented by as much of a smile as may seem appropriate.

Some girls measure off their smile very neatly. They must have some mental tape-measure to do it with. Occasionally, a very wealthy young man gets full measure, meted out and running over; a smile that shows every tooth in the head and a most unnecessary expanse of gum. Or it may be the very handsome man who receives this superabundance of smile. It is all according to the idiosyncrasy of the smiler.

And then there are girls who are awkward in their smiling. One feels sorry for them. Far, indeed, is it from them to use that yard measure! They have to take their smile as it comes, and seldom have the faintest idea as to how much it is going to be.

Too often it degenerates into a feeble grin. Practice is necessary with smiles.

They do not always come by nature, any more than Court curtseys or the art of small talk.

IV

THE DRESS ALLOWANCE

IT is part of the social duty of every husband and every father to give the wife or daughter a dress allowance, if he can possibly afford to do so. It is not only a part of his social duty, but of his domestic, which ranks far higher in our moral ethics. It is part of a woman's education to learn the value of money, and if she does not manage to do this as a girl she will miss the knowledge sadly in her later life.

'My best hat is very shabby, mother. Do you think father would give me a new one?'

'I should ask him if I were you, my dear, in a few days. Not just now, though, as I spoke to him yesterday about my old black silk.'

Such conversations as the above are less and less frequently held nowadays, for women's independence attacked the question of a regular allowance in the very beginning of the fight. This is one of the greatest improvements that has taken place since the old days when the wife sat at home and embroidered, in absolute dependence on her knight.

Few are the women and girls today who do not possess a regular allowance for their dress. Perhaps the fathers and husbands grew a little tired of having every need of their womankind obtruded on their notice.

A husband looks with approval on his wife's new hat nowadays, without any lurking recollection of a request for 'some money to buy a hat with, Harry,' and his subsequent amazement when the necessary sum was mentioned.

'Dear me!' said the husband of ten or twenty years ago, 'but you said you wanted three guineas, and there is only a bow, a rose, and the hat itself!' Now, he has nothing to do but pay a fixed sum every month or quarter, which his wife manages as she thinks fit, and he merely has to pass his opinion on the result.

Only those who have had to do it know how distasteful it is to have to ask a husband or father for money for every trifling need.

Even when a quick, ungrudging response is certain, it is an unpleasant position for a girl or woman to be in. It feels so undignified, so humiliating, never to have a penny of one's own.

The girl with an allowance feels that the responsibility of spending it is as nothing to the joy of independence. She is quite ready to incur the consequence of a little rash expenditure, so long as she is the

possessor of a regular allowance, to manage as she pleases.

'I can spend it as I like,' is her thought. In nine cases out of ten she spends it very foolishly at first. She is unable to focus a whole quarter, and does not know how many pairs of gloves may be supposed to come out of the allowance for that period.

She puckers her brows, and feels a kind of pyrotechnic display of figures in her brain as she pores over that innocent-looking account-book.

Her mother looks on a little amused, a little pitying, but not displeased. Her daughter is learning the value of money; no longer will she look upon gloves, laces, ribbons, etc., as trifles which do not make any difference. At this moment she is horrified at the total to which those little purchases at the ribbon counter have run up. It seemed such a few pence at the time, and lo! it is over half-a-sovereign.

This is terrible! There is a spring dress looming in the near future, and a hat to match, and, as a consequence, she walks with head averted from the shop-windows for nearly a week.

During her childhood and early girlhood she has taken her dresses, coats, hats, etc., from her parents more or less as a matter of course. Now she is beginning to understand that some of these gifts meant self-denial to the givers, and had perhaps

more than their money value attached to them.

During her schoolgirl days she was superbly indifferent as to the stray ink-spots and such promiscuous ornamentations with which her frocks were liberally adorned. At the same time she strenuously objected to aprons, and even thought mother rather unreasonable for wanting her to wear one. The other girls didn't wear them, and she would be laughed at if she did. Now, her eye rests with horror on the smallest pin-spot of smut, grease, or ink. She hunts out the despised aprons, and after a struggle persuades herself to wear them over her best dresses. Here is another difficulty, though.

Three aprons a week make her look very smart and speckless; but there is a person called Laundress, who does not wash those aprons for love of cleanliness, and even has the bad taste to charge extra for laces and frills. This inconsiderate person sends in her bills with astounding regularity. When she saw the size of the washing-bundle last Monday she smiled, and looked the most genial of washerwomen. She smiled when she brought it home, too, and pointed out the washing-book lying on the top. Oh, that washing-book! All this, as mother well knows, is a valuable lesson for mademoiselle. When she is married she will not let her husband's money slip through her

fingers. Her experience will have taught her just how many times a penny goes into a shilling, and she will not have to awake to the fact that twenty shillings into three is rather a tight fit.

Then will her husband thank mother, and mademoiselle (now madame) will realise why mother was looking the other way when mademoiselle's eyes went from the emaciated purse in her hand to the tempting shop-window. Every little bit of self-denial has taught her a little lesson, and she understands that she may have five pounds in her purse and yet not be able to afford a half-guinea article.

It was in the old days of dependence on the father that young wives were so hard on their husbands' incomes. Who does not remember Dora, and poor David Copperfield's trials during their brief married life? If Miss Spenlow had had a dress allowance, and done a little housekeeping, would Mrs Copperfield have been driven to such despair over her accounts?

What would the wife of to-day say if her husband acted like Samuel Pepys? 'Went with my wife to Paul's Churchyard to choose her a laced petticoat,' he tells us. Mrs Pepys did not seem to think this unusual.

The next step was the money doled out for various needs, but without personal supervision.

Now, those girls who have not regular allowances are mostly those who earn their own living in some way or another.

Many girls who are not in the least 'advanced' are yet independent by their own exertions.

They say that a hat at nine shillings and elevenpence three farthings, bought with money earned by themselves, is better than a five-guinea headgear bought by father. 'Papa' used to give 'Mamma' so much at a time; but 'Father' hands 'Mother' a cheque once a month or once a quarter, and smiles indulgently, free from any *arrière pensée*, when a charming vision dances in and cries: 'Look, father, I got it such a bargain at the cheap sale at So-and-so's.'

Every girl has a right to an allowance; to withhold it is to do her an injury.

A country girl in London for the first time is bewildered by the noise and rush of the streets. Her inexperience causes her to hesitate on the kerbstone, or else to plunge rashly into the seething traffic.

And, in the same way, a girl who has never had the control of money is apt to lose her head if she, after marriage, suddenly finds herself in charge of so much a year without mother's restraining influence to guide her.

Father must think of his daughter's future, and take his part in fitting her

for the world, when he and mother may not be there to guide her and give her a gentle hint when she begins to get giddy in the whirl and toss of her wider life.

V

AT A BALL

IT is the fate of some girls to be attracted by the very type of man who fails to find them attractive. Even in the ephemeral matter of a ballroom acquaintance this often occurs. A tall girl, who naturally prefers a tall partner, is surrounded by all the smallest men in the room, who admire her stature and are anxious to secure a dance.

The tall men are just as eagerly hunting out the ladies of unimportant inches, whom Nature teaches them to select. It is often said by men that tall women like short men.

I do not think so. As a rule they have to put up with them, for no better reason than that the short men prefer them. A woman has to wait till she is asked, whether for a dance or for a partnership for life. To men it is given to choose. Women have the comparatively passive *rôle* of merely accepting or declining.

This last word reminds me to warn inexperienced girls that they should not refuse to dance with any man unless they can plead a previous

engagement. It would not do to decline dancing with one man and then accept the offer of another. If a previous engagement cannot be pleaded, then the only thing to do is to dance no more that night. There is no other polite way of getting out of dancing with the man.

If he has been excessively rude in any way, then the snub involved in refusing him and accepting another might be partly justified, but no gentlewoman would ever administer it. And for this reason. At a ball, all the men present are supposed to be friends of the host and hostess, and therefore must be treated with courtesy.

Some girls are occasionally guilty of the flagrant rudeness of throwing over a partner to whom they have engaged themselves in favour of one whom, for the moment, they prefer. This is unpardonable, for it gives rise at times to a 'scene,' and girls who cause scenes are never likely to be welcomed again at the same house.

The man thrown over comes up to claim his dance, and, finding that the lady is about to start off with someone else, says, 'But this is my dance, Miss Dash.' She 'thinks not,' and not improbably the partner preferred gives some small sign of enjoying the discomfiture of the other. Or the other thinks he does.

Then angry passions rise. When the men are perfectly well-bred there

is no scene. All passes calmly off; but what man in the position of the repudiated partner could help feeling irritated?

The worst part of this business, to my thinking, is the decided encouragement it gives to the favoured swain. He immediately concludes that he has made a tremendous impression, when very likely it is only because he dances well and the other man does not that the preference is awarded to him.

It may not be amiss to remark that a man need not feel unduly flattered even if he should become aware of any such eagerness. He need not think for a moment that it is his own personality that attracts. He may be handsome, charming, delightful, an Adonis and an Apollo rolled into one, but for all that his value in a ballroom is that he represents a dance, perhaps three or four dances.

Even if he is plain, insignificant, and of no social importance, if he can only dance he is in request. But let him not feed his vanity with that assurance.

When programmes are used, the girl examines hers when she is asked for a dance. Her would-be partner will probably hold out his hand for it, but should she prefer not to show it to him, she can quietly but firmly retain it, and herself inscribe his name or initials opposite the number arranged for. The more usual way is

to hand him the card for examination, when he will write his own name after obtaining permission to do so. There is the advantage about this that the girl will have some clearer information about his name than that usually obtainable from an introduction. Very few people pronounce clearly when introducing.

When this ceremony is performed, the man bows, the girl gives him a little inclination of the head. Handshakes are never exchanged, except under very special circumstances, such as meeting a long-talked-of relative of some very intimate friend.

The girl rises from her seat when her partner is ready, a condition which he betokens by offering his arm. After the dance there is generally a short stroll about the room, or an invitation to visit the refreshment buffet and have a glass of lemonade. Then the partner takes the girl to her chaperon.

It is sometimes necessary for her to give him a little hint to do so. If he is attracted by her, he will have little scruple in throwing over the girl he is engaged to for the next dance and doing his best to secure the society of the girl he admires. In such a case she may find it judicious to say, 'Mrs So-and-so will be expecting me'; or, 'My partner for the next dance will be looking for me,' and he will then be obliged to take her back.

I could tell girls of a perfectly civil,

if rather deceitful, way of avoiding disagreeable partners, and keeping dances for agreeable ones. The method is this: Secure two programmes. On one of them fill in initials after every dance, and show that programme to the men with whom you do not wish to dance. Do not let them examine it very closely, however. The other programme can be produced for the partners who dance well, or who are agreeable for some other reason. This is a Machiavellian policy, but I feel that it cannot be wrong to teach it to girls who would otherwise be at the mercy of circumstances.

Matters have changed in connection with the chaperon. Now there is often more difficulty in finding the chaperon than in discovering the promised partner, who is supposed to be under her charge.

She is probably dancing herself, or, if not dancing, is 'sitting out' in some secluded corner of the stairs or sheltered nook in the 'con*vers*atory,' enjoying one of those flirtations in which the married woman of our day is frequently an adept.

The typical chaperon of some years ago wore a turban, or a most elaborate cap, a dress of some fabric so rich that it 'could stand alone,' and a handsome shawl or cloak, with highly complicated trimmings of embroidery or braiding. She was ample, in every sense of the word, broad of

chest, of shoulders, and quite equal to the task of chaperonage, which really meant something in the days when fortune-hunters of the male sex thought little of abducting an heiress, and when the feat of Jock o' Hazeldean was by no means an uncommon one.

Whether she was the girl's mother or only her temporary guardian, she kept a sharp eye upon her movements, and not even the attractions of the supper-room put her off her guard. Her charge returned dutifully to her after each dance, and was taken from her protecting wing by the next claimant for the honour of her hand.

The chaperon of to-day is frequently a contrast in every possible respect. The question is, which of the two varieties does a girl prefer?

If she is endowed with those nice instincts which teach her that she must never be *de trop*, she will prefer the trustworthy lady whose own day is long over, and who is at leisure from herself to guide and guard her charge.

What can be more disagreeable to a girl of this class than to feel that while she is wandering about looking for her chaperon she is keeping prisoner a man who is possibly anxious to seek out his next partner? He cannot leave her unprotected, and she knows it. The predicament is a most awkward one for her, and all the more so that she feels that pro-

fuse apologies would only make matters worse.

The class of girl who likes the irresponsible dancing, flirting chaperon is not as yet a very numerous one; but yet English Society is well aware of her. She is the 'fast girl' who enjoys a cigarette, can toss off a B. and S., plays an excellent game of billiards, and asks no better 'fun' than to curtail her skirts, shoulder a gun, and accompany her brother and his friends to the coverts on a fine autumn morning.

Men find her an amusing companion. She frequently marries well, being usually pretty, for very plain girls would scarcely venture on so bold a *rôle*. She has invariably good feet and well-turned ankles, and if her voice be a little hard in speaking, she can sing so sweetly as to keep alive in men's hearts the romance that her mannish ways might otherwise dispel.

Women rarely love her, but she is, nevertheless, capable of very warm affection for women. She laughs at Mrs Grundy, but that old lady occasionally, like Nemesis with a false front on, has her innings, late but victorious.

There is a certain degree of laxity in many details of modern Society. The matter of chaperons is one out of many which show that we are drifting away from the days when girls were too tightly pinioned by

social rules into an opposite extreme which can but be prejudicial to their interests.

Men set little store by what is carelessly guarded. They undervalue the fruit that hangs over the garden-wall, and long for what is beyond their reach. This is human nature, and the ideal chaperon understands human nature. She is unselfish enough to deny herself the gratification of dancing, even if she be young enough to enjoy it and to be sure of partners if she cared for them.

The girls who accompany her know exactly where to find her, and their partners think all the more highly of them because a gentle and gracious woman thinks it worth her while to devote herself to them and forget herself in them. Be she mother or friend only, she is careful to suggest to giddy Amy that three times are as often as a girl can dance with the same man in one evening without getting herself unpleasantly talked of; nor will she fail quietly to arrange so that a certain decidedly ineligible young fellow shall receive a polite negative where he confidently looked for an acceptance of his invitation for the waltz. She neglects nothing, from a 'detrimental' to a draught, from the moment of their leaving the carriage till that of their re-entering it. Her tact is of incalculable aid to inexperienced, and is by no means to be despised by experienced, girls.

In a hundred small ways undreamed of by the dancing chaperon she contributes to their social success. A woman of the world, she understands how to make it place a proper value on the dainty wares she displays, and if she herself looks upon her charges, in a sense, as merchandise, she takes care that no effort shall be wanting on her part to show it to the best advantage.

Some girls are very greedy about partners and do not like to introduce to other girls the men with whom they dance. This is bad form anywhere, but more particularly when the girl is in her own home at a dance. She is then a sort of hostess, and should, outwardly at least, prefer the convenience and welfare of her guests to her own.

Many years ago a girl at a dance heard a young officer say to one of the daughters of the house,—

'Introduce me to the girl in green, will you?'

'No,' was the answer. 'You would not like her; she's a horrid girl!'

The 'girl in green' heard every word of this dialogue. She was, in reality, a great friend of the girls at whose home the dance was given, and they all liked her and made much of her. She felt very much snubbed, and the evening was spoiled for her.

Next day she called and said to her friend, 'I overheard what you said to Captain Blank last night when

he asked to be introduced to me.' A rush of colour flooded the other's face. 'It *was* a shame,' she said; 'but I was afraid that if I introduced him to you he would not dance with me again, and his step suits mine perfectly.'

This little incident just shows that a girl may be unscrupulous about her friends when it is a question of losing a dance with an agreeable partner.

But can anything be in worse taste than for the daughters of the house to enjoy every dance while their girl-guests are adorning the walls? No really well-bred girl would behave in this way. If she were pretty and popular, she could manage to induce her men-guests to dance with her girl friends before giving them a waltz on her own account.

When I was editing a monthly magazine I received many questions from girls about matters of social behaviour. One of these ran: 'Between the dances at a ball must I take lemonade every time a partner suggests it?' This funny notion amused us all at the time, but it represents the attitude of mind of many a girl who, with no mother or other close friend to ask, is so uncertain about what she ought to do as to be quite miserable.

The girl who visits the refreshment-room between all the dances would soon acquire an unenviable reputation. 'How many ices may I eat at a ball?' was another question asked

me through the periodical in question. 'I love ices,' the querist added. In reply I suggested that two ices were as many as would be good for any girl at a dance. A few weeks later she wrote me a short song of triumph. 'I had seven ices,' she said, 'and my partners held them for me.' She did not mention whether or no she felt quite well the next day.

A third question ran: 'When I am in the company of two brothers, what am I to call the younger? Suppose the name to be Jones, am I to call the younger Mr Henry?'

In speaking to him, it is as well to say 'Mr Jones,' and in speaking of him to say 'Mr Henry Jones.' These are little problems that crop up in a girl's path, and she has always an uneasy feeling that she may possibly be guilty of some solecism, a most uncomfortable sensation for a young thing just launched upon the social sea.

Another question that I remember having been asked in those days was the following: 'At a ball or at an "At Home" should I pass on almost immediately after greeting my hostess?' Yes, if other arrivals are claiming her attention. But the girl's chaperon usually takes the lead in such matters, and the girl has but to follow.

Sometimes a girl goes with her brother to a ball and is not otherwise formally chaperoned. It is not a

comfortable position, for the brother is usually intent on his own amusement, and lets his sister drift. It is just as well, in such circumstances, to say to some friend who has daughters there, 'May I come to you between the dances?' or, 'May I stay by you?' One then feels sure of never becoming a burden upon one's partner, for it is by no means always safe to assume that every man with whom one dances is violently in love with one.

'How can I stop a man flirting with me when I have, without thinking, let him drift into rather a flirty way?' So wrote a Yorkshire girl. What a difficult question! I forget how I answered it then. Shall I try to do so now?

Girls who blush easily find it very difficult to check any advances made in this direction. They feel that their blushes 'give them away,' to use a graphic slang expression. Otherwise there is a useful expression of cold stoniness that will be found a grand weapon of defence against a compliment. In nothing does a man show his breeding or his lack of it more than in the style and tone of his compliments. Some are so delicately conveyed that they could not offend. Others are so broadly worded and uttered with so much emphasis that they become a positive rudeness. The only way to receive such as these is with chilly reserve; to make-believe as though nothing whatever in the

nature of a compliment had been uttered.

This is not always easy, even for the girl of sanguine complexion whose tint deepens half a dozen times an hour. But a little practice soon renders one an adept.

If it is a question of wishing to withdraw from a flirtation that has become rather advanced, the matter is a more difficult one. A man who has been encouraged finds it hard to believe that he is being discouraged. He probably thinks that the girl's efforts in this direction are merely part of her flirting paraphernalia, and accepts it more or less good-humouredly. The snubbing process is a very painful one for any well-bred girl to have to follow. She cannot be actually rude, and yet she has to keep back the admiration or devotion that before she accepted.

When a man has been sending flowers, it seems most ungracious to begin suddenly to refuse to accept them. When he has been in the habit of constantly calling at her parents' house, and of filling in his name after several dances on her programmes, it becomes almost impossible to repel him without actual rudeness.

Could there be a better reason advanced against a girl's unduly encouraging any man until she has discovered all there is to be known about him and found out if she can really

like him well enough to become eventually his wife?

The best way is to speak plainly when he protests, as, sooner or later, he is sure to do. 'I've had only one waltz this evening, and you refuse me any more. You used to give me three or four. What have I done to offend you?'

The reply might be: 'You have not offended me; but I do not care to dance so often with one partner. It is a censorious world.' Such platitudes as this are often useful in saving a situation. Or, if a girl possesses a bright and airy manner, she may laughingly talk nothings in a baffling way, as did Cyrano de Bergerac in the scene where he was determined to let the lovers have time for an interview before their parting. There are many things that can never be taught. They bubble up naturally in a girlish heart, and she will often find that it is less what she says that has its effect than the manner and look with which it is accompanied.

VI

FLIRTING

THERE are various definitions of flirting. What do you mean by it?

Wickedly and wantonly to lead young men to believe that one is in love with them?

Yes, that is what you mean by flirting.

What I call flirting is merely doing one's best to please, playing a game with counters instead of money, deceiving nobody because all are treated alike, but merely, by one's manner, saying, 'I like to talk to you, and you, I fancy, have no objection to talk to me!'

Possibly this pleasant sort of social intercourse may lead to the deeper depth of the supposed reader's definition, but not when a girl is honest and true of heart. When she finds that she is being taken as meaning more than she feels she at once draws back. Almost instinctively she changes her manner to any man whose looks and words are warmer in character than she expects or wishes. Unless, indeed, he is the true man of her choice—which is a very different

thing, and at once lifts the matter out of the region of flirting.

When a girl deliberately leads a man on with the intention of getting him to propose to her, she knowing all the time that she means to refuse him, she is a wicked flirt, a heartless, selfish, vain coquette. There ought to be a far worse word than 'flirt' to apply to her. It is nothing but vanity that leads her to accept his attentions and appear to be anxious for them.

I have seen a girl of this sort look a young man straight in the eyes with a glance that eloquently invites him to believe that she loves him. At table and elsewhere I have remarked this quiet, even sly, by-play, and felt so assured that she really liked the young fellow that I expected to hear they were engaged.

On the contrary, she refused him when he proposed. Those glances of hers were simply meant to lead him on. A fresh conquest was all she wanted. This girl used all the weapons with which Nature has endowed her—she is a pretty girl—to lure the moth into the candle.

Burnt wings must be painful. What does the selfish flirt care? It is not she who feels the pain. Her sentiments are those of pride and joy. Elate with her little triumph, she forgets that it is one of those that cost very dear, for does she not lose the respect and affection of all who observe her sly and selfish little game?

No really pure-hearted, high-minded girl could act in such a manner. Her delicacy would revolt from intimate conversation and the interchange of *œillades* with any man save one she loved. In fact, a really good, unspoiled, fresh, modest, natural girl almost always entertains a sentiment of actual dislike for a man who displays a passionate attachment that she does not return. It is strange that it should be so. But it is true. She seems to recoil from the approach of Love when it comes from the wrong quarter. As to playing with it, as does the furtive flirt, she would feel herself degraded in giving the slightest encouragement. Her instinct is to repel.

This sometimes makes her manner hard and cruel to the unfortunate man. But how superior, even in the matter of kindness, is such cruelty to the tender mercies of the practised flirt!

The man at least knows his fate. He indulges in no false hopes. He is not led on to declare himself, merely to suffer the humiliation of a refusal and the pain of disappointment. A really nice girl, with innate instincts of delicacy, and the good breeding of the gentlewoman, can always manage to avert a proposal. Except in the rarest cases, when the man is tremendously in love and determines to know his fate, a girl can quietly intimate by her manner

that she does not care for him, and that it is useless for him to persevere.

She is the girl who is really worth loving!

But then, what sort of flirting is it that comes under the head of a social duty to be performed? It is really a graceful adaptation of oneself to the various characteristics of those we find around us; a chameleon-like reflecting of the widely differing temperaments that surround us.

'Miss So-and-so talks books with young Blank, horses with Mr Dash, and theatres with Captain Something. She is a flirt!'

Yes, but of the right sort. She carries her gay good humour, her sparkling sense of fun, into all she does. Her pretty eyes flash mirth into the eyes of her interlocutor as she chatters away; but if he should chance to be in the slightest degree misled by it into thinking that she has a *tendresse* for himself, he will soon be wholesomely and very thoroughly undeceived.

And how? Why, all he has to do is to watch her as she laughs and talks with Mr Three Stars. There is the same display of white teeth and sparkling eyes, the same flow of spirits that the vain man conceived to have been elicited by his own special attractions.

A little of this kind of flirting is as sunshine in the gatherings that might otherwise be so dull and monotonous.

Many a husband is fain to acknowledge that the bright, engaging manner of his wife—which outsiders might call flirting—has caused a dinner-party to go off well, which, in the hands of a dull and spiritless woman, might have proved a sad failure.

And it is the horrid, designing, selfish flirts who make the bright natures afraid of doing all they might to enliven Society, and irradiate their own especial bit of the long, monotonous road. The latter are so afraid of being mistaken for one of the former despicable class that they are often dull when they might be lively. 'I was so afraid they might think I was flirting.' This is the *bête noire* of some girls' lives. And small wonder!

When one thinks it over, the influence of the deceitful, dangerous flirt is far-reaching. She deprives many of her sex of much of the enjoyment of life.

For instance, a nice girl is almost afraid to speak to curates, because she knows so well that most girls flirt with them.

A nice woman withdraws from intellectual conversation with her vicar, simply because she is well aware that half the women of the congregation make a little Pope of him. Rather than be included in the adulatory crowd, she keeps away, often to her own loss, sometimes to his as well. Vicar-worship and curate-

adoration have strange counter-effects that must often puzzle both vicar and curate. 'What a cold, stiff manner Mrs Blank had this morning!' Yes! Had she not just observed Mrs Dash greeting the vicar with an amount of spontaneity and gush that made her feel a desire to outbalance it with its opposite?

A lady who had made her home a pleasant meeting-place for young men employed in the same office with her son, one day heard the following remark,—

'Mrs Such-an-one is very fond of young men!'

Perhaps the tone of the observation conveyed more meaning than the mere words. Mrs Such-an-one was greatly wounded by it, and almost resolved to give up her evenings since calumny's voice was beginning to be raised. But when it came to the point, she found she could not do it. Why should she turn a cold shoulder, merely because of an odious word, to the young men who had come to look upon her as a second mother? By opening her house to them she felt she was doing something towards opposing the influences of a great city, full of evil, upon inexperienced young men.

She had received letters expressing heart-felt gratitude from the mothers of one or two among them. Why should a stray shaft of envy, hatred malice, and all uncharitableness

force her to give up what she was doing?

She persevered. But the joy was gone from it. Its wellspring was poisoned. She was suspected of the baser sort of 'flirting,' when practising every art, consistent with the highest motives, to attract the friends of her boys to the safeness of her home.

VII

LETTER WRITING

IT is as rude to leave a letter unanswered as it is to leave a question unanswered in conversation. There are many people who are almost incredibly lazy about replying to letters.

Or would it be better to say that they are negligent? Call it what we like, it amounts to much the same thing. It is an impoliteness.

Invitations, especially, should be answered promptly; and this applies more particularly to dinner invitations. Dinner is the principal social meal in most civilised countries. It has even more than a social importance. Whenever a man has achieved some great deed, he is asked to a dinner. That is the first substantial acknowledgment he receives. This alone proves that the meal is by far the most important on our list, so far as Society is concerned. It is extremely discourteous to leave an invitation unanswered, and for this reason: A hostess settles in her own mind how many guests she will ask

to dine. If those who cannot accept delay in writing to say so she is placed in a predicament. The vacant places ought to be filled, but how can she invite anyone at the last moment? It is considered a very bad compliment to be invited as a *pis aller*. Naturally enough, for one says,—

'If Mrs So-and-so really wanted to have me, she would have asked me in the first instance.' And with this thought in the mind some people write a huffy refusal.

Others, with greater knowledge of the world and more reasonableness and good temper, know very well that dinner parties have to consist of a limited number, even in palaces. There is not accommodation for all our friends in our homes or at a restaurant table.

Consequently, we dine as many at a time as we can comfortably arrange for. Should Mrs C. refuse, and Mrs D. be asked, it only means that her turn comes a little sooner. Fortunately there are many women who can take a pleasant view of a late invitation, not being wrapped up in a prickly garment of self-consciousness and spurious dignity.

But it is never agreeable to a hostess to have to send a late invitation; and it is quite unpardonable, therefore, for anyone to delay in answering a note asking her to dine.

The usual size of notepaper for this purpose is the 'Albert.' It is sold

with envelopes that exactly take it.

A true gentlewoman loves to have everything neat and suitable about her, and it is one of the things that denote a lady. Notepaper should be good but simple. Elaboration is quite out of place on stationery or visiting-cards. And as to colour, the safest plan is to use plain white, whether cream-laid or ribbed, according to choice.

Girls are allowed a little more choice in the matter. They may use pale mauve or pale green, or Wedgwood blue notepaper, with a little spray of flowers, perhaps their name-flower, in the corner. But the matron will do well to restrict herself to white. It is suitable to all purposes.

There is a grey shade of notepaper that is useful for letters of condolence. It is not exactly mourning paper, but it seems a suitable tint, and one chooses it as naturally as one selects a dark costume and a quiet hat or bonnet in which to pay a visit of condolence.

The address on the notepaper should be large enough to be perfectly distinct, but not so large as to be obtrusive. The colour may be any that is preferred, but it is well to be content with one colour and to avoid gilding. Gilt edges to notepaper or correspondence cards are equally to be avoided, as well as scalloped edges,

coloured lines or flowery borders to notepaper or envelopes.

No person of position uses a crest on notepaper or invitation cards. I have even seen two crests on one small sheet of notepaper! This is a flagrant error in taste, and sometimes in accuracy as well.

A wealthy tradesman some two years since paid a smart young man to make out his pedigree for him and provide him with a legitimate crest and coat-of-arms.

The young man ran him up a bill of two hundred pounds, and certainly proved most energetic; one result of his labours being a prosecution for altering entries in parish registers, defacing the inscriptions on tombstones, etc., for which he suffered a term of imprisonment.

Would it not have been better to apply to the Heralds' Office?

But even when found, or invented, the crest should not find its way to the notepaper, even of the head of the house. Women, unless one of our sex should happen to be the head of her house, have no right to use a crest. Why not? Because women cannot be soldiers. The crest was the ornament in front of the helmet, and the motto belonged to the crest.

It is extraordinary how a morning runs away when one is merely writing notes! Perhaps that may be one reason that so many persons are extremely lazy about it.

But what a beautifully 'clear' feeling it gives one to get every letter answered, even those from abroad, and to have despatched the necessary postcards that are so useful in sending orders to one's tradespeople.

I say 'even' letters from abroad. These are sometimes postponed from a rather natural feeling that it ought to be a long letter and an interesting one, to go so far and cost so much postage. One waits to collect news worthy the occasion, and hesitates to believe one's letter of sufficient importance not to prove disappointing to the recipient.

About postcards. It is not considered very polite to communicate with one's friends on postcards, without having first discovered if they have any objection to receiving them.

This should always be ascertained. There is one convenience about postcards, and that is that they are meant to be read by anyone who chooses to do so. Consequently, if the person to whom one is addressed should happen to be away, or ill, some other member of the household can attend to the matter of which the card treats, thereby possibly averting inconvenience from the sender.

In the same way orders on postcards can be seen to by someone other than the principal, should he happen to be away or engaged.

People who live in the country

usually put their full address upon their notepaper. Dwellers in London would not put the name of our great city. Only commercial notepaper is so headed.

But in the case of a country town it is always as well to add the name of the county in which it is situated. Every country lady provides herself with notepaper on which the name of the nearest town and the nearest station are printed, usually in a diagonal line in the opposite corner to that containing the address. In smaller characters the information is sometimes given as to where telegrams should be sent.

Of course, these particulars do not appear upon all the notepaper that is used. The mere address is enough. A monogram is sometimes added as an ornament, but it is always the safer plan to have everything connected with correspondence as simple as possible.

A girl may have her name written ornamentally in some pretty tint across her notepaper, but it becomes a ridiculous fashion when followed by older persons. For instance, a stout, middle-aged woman, christened Elizabeth, does not do well to have 'Lily' written in pretty yellow ink across her notepaper. The suggestion of the lovely name and soft tint does not assort comfortably with the personality of the writer of letters on such paper.

Pet names, alas! can be outgrown as well as several other nice things that are the peculiar property of youth.

Notepaper with a dainty flower in one corner is as much out of place in the writing-desk of the middle aged as a flowery hat would be upon her head.

It really seems as though it would be a sensible plan to have one sort of etiquette for high Society and another for the great middle classes.

We may take the one instance of visiting cards. The really sensible custom, where servants are not highly trained, would be for a caller to send in her card to the lady called on, who would then have some means of ascertaining the identity of her visitor.

As things are now, one is dependent on the servant's distinct enunciation, a thing that often does not exist, for information as to who is about to enter the room. The result is not always agreeable.

But etiquette, borrowed of a higher class, forbids us to send in our card, and we can only do our best to induce our servants to pronounce the names of callers with particular distinctness.

There was a time when it was rather the fashion to write indistinctly. It was a stupid fashion, and so are many others; but this one resulted in inconvenience to several people, including the postmen, and some-

times to the writer herself. It is now considered 'smart' to write a large and legible hand. This is true politeness.

But there are many who seem to be absolutely incapable of forming the letters distinctly. Probably they were carelessly taught when first beginning to write. However this may be, it is the social duty of every girl and woman to write her notes and letters and postcards as distinctly and clearly as she can. And it is true good manners to be extremely careful about the spelling of the names of those to whom she writes. It is a matter on which many persons are sensitive to an extraordinary degree. We may not be able to sympathise with them in being so touchy as they sometimes are on a point that is comparatively trivial; but, still, it is impolite to ignore it.

For instance, if Mrs Browne, with a final *e* should happen to be addressed as Brown without the final *e*, she may possibly feel almost insulted. If she is sensible she takes no notice of it, beyond a passing thought that her correspondent has not examined with sufficient care the visiting card left on her hall table when she, Mrs Browne, had made a call.

The Conynghames dislike being addressed on envelopes as Cunningham. The Mainwarings detest being styled plain Mannering.

The Græmes feel annoyed when

they are spelled mere Graham. What would happen to them if they were to visit the County Down, Ireland, where their patronymic would be immediately converted, orally at least, into 'Grimes'?

Vyvyans who have two y's in their name, like the fine old Cornish baronetcy with its splendid record on both sides of the house, cannot be expected to feel pleased when the ignorant or the careless defraud their name of one or both of these. The name Bayley and its cognates afford a good opportunity for being conscientiously accurate. For he who is Baillie will be aware of an inward protest if addressed as Baily, and *vice versâ*. The name Davis is another pitfall for the unwary. As to the great army of individuals whose patronymic begins with Mac, Mc, or M', some followed by a capital, and others not, they are a bewildering and a numerous company.

I find it is a good plan when first introduced to people with what I may term a query in their names, to frankly ask them to spell them for me.

No one could be offended at this, unless he or she should happen to be so celebrated that not to know his or her name, how it is spelled and all about it, is a piece of shocking ignorance.

However, the best we can do is to use our utmost care to get the correct spelling and the proper initials before

and after, and if we do our very best we have at least the satisfaction of feeling that we can do no more.

Another point about which letter writers cannot be too particular is in correctly addressing their communications. The name of the street, road, terrace, square, gardens or crescent should be distinctly written by those who possess that useful thing, troublesome to themselves but very advantageous to others—a social conscience. There are many who are almost wholly destitute of it. They 'think' it is Penton Terrace! It might be place or crescent, but their address-book is quite at the other end of the room. It is too much trouble to get up to verify the address. Is the number 27 or 72? Never mind! Put 27 on chance. The postman will be sure to find the right house.

Thus the conscienceless!

Another thing that it is no more than good manners to put correctly is the Christian name or initial of anyone addressed on an envelope as Esq.

And still more important, in this light, are the initials that follow the name, indicating military or professional, parliamentary or diplomatic rank. To address a member of the Cabinet or Privy Council without the prefix 'Right Hon.' is to display gross ignorance.

If a gentleman holds the rank of Knight Commander of the Bath, the

letters K.C.B. must always follow his name or title on an envelope. In that very useful and excellently compact publication *Who's Who*, all the abbreviations and initials are translated into their full signification. It is a very comprehensive list, and includes even the names of the States of America, with their often puzzling abbreviations, one of the oddest of which is Pa for Pennsylvania.

I have found in the last two articles so much to say about notepaper, addresses, and other of the mere surroundings of correspondence that not a word has been written about the real thing—the contents.

And, after all, these are most important. I have never had much faith in *Complete Letter Writers* or models of correspondence suited to all possible occasions, and have no intention of offering any advice in this fashion. There are so many different dispositions in the world, varying as widely as the forms and features of the possessors, that it would be a very difficult matter to compose a letter that would find favour with even two individuals who wished to write upon a certain subject. And then, again, there is such variety of circumstance that the task of suiting correspondence to them would be colossal.

But there are generalities of a certain kind that apply to all sorts of correspondence, and which the

inexperienced cannot possibly be expected to know. About these we might profitably confer.

Letters, then, are of two kinds: business and friendly. The former cannot be too short. The latter are very seldom found too long.

Let us take the business letters first. Women of the cultivated classes have far more business letters to write than their mothers or their grandmothers. A hundred and one of the details of everyday life are now left to women which once were considered entirely within the province of the master of the house. The widening of our borders has led us women of Great Britain to lead a much fuller life than ever was enjoyed by our predecessors. But with this width of horizon come responsibilities that never fell upon them.

But who would exchange? Who would return into the narrow chamber and shut the door upon all that offers itself to our energies? No one, surely.

To the wife, then, now falls a mass of correspondence with tradespeople, plumbers, gas-fitters, agents, tax-collectors, railway companies, etc., etc., and the busy wife often gets her daughters to 'dash off' a few notes for her while she is occupied with some of the multifarious concerns of the household.

To the novice my first piece of

advice is to avoid using the third person in writing business notes. It is often difficult to avoid confusion with pronouns in writing a note in this form. And also it is well to drop entirely the time-honoured expression 'presents her compliments.' It has for years been falling into disuse, chiefly for the reason that it conveys the idea of social superiority, which should never be obtruded upon the recipient of the letter.

For instance, in writing about the character of a servant to someone who is a perfect stranger, it is quite unnecessary—and, in fact, is an error —to use the third person; 'Madam' is the correct form.

This reminds me to observe that when a lady writes to another asking her to give particulars of the character of a domestic, she is really asking a favour. This seems to be very often forgotten, with the consequence that the style of the letter is rather abrupt. It is not always an agreeable task, that of detailing the points of a servant's conduct and disposition, and the least that one can do, when requesting a lady to undertake it, is to ask it as a favour instead of claiming it as a right. The law does not oblige any employer to give information as to those in his or her employ. That it is very generally done only goes to prove that the world is for the most part kindly.

In writing a letter of inquiry, every-

thing should be done to make the reply as easy as possible. The questions should be asked with as much distinctness as possible. It is worth while to take some trouble about this.

It is not usual in writing about the character of a servant to enclose a stamped envelope for the reply. This is not done when writing to an equal or a superior, except when the person addressed holds an official position.

That immediately turns the letter into pure business, and a stamp, in such cases, should always be enclosed for a reply. It is much more satisfactory to send an addressed envelope, as then it is sure to be accurate. If one is weak about the signature it is a precautionary measure to do this.

Business letters should be as brief as may be consistent with clearness. Not an unnecessary word should be used except those needed for courtesy. Sometimes very shabby notepaper is used for business letters.

This is foolish, for it conveys a wrong idea, and may lead to complications. 'Costly thy *paper* as thy purse can buy; neat, but not gaudy.' The paraphrase is permissible.

Private letters are of two kinds—formal and informal. Invitations are included in the first. When they are formal they are written in the third person, even when the inviter and invited are close friends. This form is an intimation that the dinner or

lunch, etc., is intended to be something more than an ordinary home evening with the family party.

The invitation must be answered in the same formal way. But an informal invitation, written in the first person, should never be answered in the third, and *vice versâ*.

An invitation written on a card, part of which is printed, should be answered on Albert-sized notepaper.

What is called a 'general invitation' is not of much value. 'Come and dine some evening' is not an invitation that anyone could accept. 'You must spend a long day with us. Write and say what day you can come' is another apples of Sodom sort of phrase. No one would be more surprised than the inviter if the invitee should comply with this very vague request.

As to letters that are written to friends, there is a great art in them. An old rule was to the effect that such letters should never begin with the pronoun 'I.' But this only referred to an egoistic sentence, deprecating the beginning of a letter with an account of one's own doings. 'I hope' is quite permissible when it refers to some subject in connection with the person addressed. 'I am sure,' 'I fear,' 'I trust,' all these may have reference to the concerns of the recipient of the letter.

It is a good rule to begin a letter with subjects connected with the

person to whom it is written, and having exhausted these, then to tell one's personal news and give information likely to prove interesting. Letters from home to one who is absent are likely to prove very disappointing if all the details of home life are omitted.

Yet this is the very thing that bad correspondents do. They seem unable to put themselves in the place of those who are far away; recount what is interesting to themselves, and fill up with remarks upon the weather! Such a correspondent is an irritating being. The world is pretty full of them. The good correspondent tells all the news, treasures up bits of interesting matter for the absent, and takes trouble to make her letters such as she would like to receive herself in circumstances similar to those in which her friend is placed.

Crossing a letter is quite unpardonable. Stationery is cheap, postage is cheap; there is no reason for crossing the lines. There was a time when both postage and stationery were very expensive, and in those old days a crossed letter was actually regarded as a mark of friendship.

Some of them were crossed and recrossed! Dear friends filled every corner of the paper, and resented it if the replies were not equally indicative of regard. But nowadays a crossed letter is by no means a mark of friendship. Very much the reverse!

To be illegible is to be impolite. It stands on the same ground with indistinctness in speech, which is, when avoidable, uncourteous.

The best means of acquiring a clear handwriting is, first, to take pains about the formation of every letter; and, second, to use such implements as are best suited to the character of one's caligraphy. There is no lack of variety in this particular. How different it is now from the days when there were only quills to write with, and when the only choice lay between a hard one and a soft. In the middle of the century there were no steel pens.

Now, it is no exaggeration to say that there are at least a thousand varieties, to say nothing of the reservoir pens that are such a boon to the busy and to those who, before they were invented, had to depend on the ink and stationery to be found in the different offices they visited. Commercial men must bless the inventors. Every taste is suited in the steel pens, and as to holders, their name is legion.

There should be no difficulty, once the hand is formed, in procuring the exact sort of pen to suit it. It is an odd thing; but, even where one's own interests are concerned, there is a kind of slovenly-mindedness that prevents many from accurately ascertaining the details of their own needs. Take, for instance, 'J' nibs. Thousands of those who use them habitually will be unable to tell the number or the letter that

distinguishes the particular variety that suits them best.

It is well to ascertain this, once for all, and abide by the sort in question. In the same way, some kinds of handwriting are at their best on cream-laid notepaper, while others look better on that which has some roughness of surface—this is another point to be kept clearly in the mind.

A nice girl will take as much pains with the details of her little davenport or writing-table as she does with the *minutiæ* of her toilette. Everything will be neat, well dusted, in its place, and as good of its kind as she can afford without destroying the symmetry of her expenditure. There is a beautiful symmetry in duly apportioning to each item its own correct share.

A girl's individuality expresses itself in the daintiness of her belongings, and in nothing could this kind of mute eloquence be more articulate than in connection with her writing-table. The blotting-paper would not be a shabby, worn-out sheet that looks as if it ought to have been superannuated long ago; nor would the nibs be spavined, rusty, incapable-looking things that no one would willingly essay to write with.

It may be said that no one ever had such things on any decent writing-table. I only describe, however, what I have seen in houses where almost every other provision was of a superior

kind. Oh, the scrapy, scratchy pens, the thick, corroded ink, the shabby blotting-paper, and the numerous excuses that I have been presented with on some occasions when asked to write down an address or some other little bit of information!

There is such a difference in people. Some women (and girls) have everything so perfectly appointed, from great affairs to small, that it is a pleasure to see their houses or their sitting-rooms, as the case may be.

Visiting cards, though never sent by post, except in very rare cases, may be dealt with under the head of stationery, which comes under that of correspondence. It is always well to go to a good shop for these and for invitation cards. A long-established firm of good reputation is no dearer in the end than a shabby little shop which, professing to be cheap, is expensive in the end, because unsatisfactory. The great advantage, however, in dealing with the large firms is that they are familiar with every change of fashion, and are not merely stationers, but faithful guides to the details that so often puzzle the inexperienced.

Visiting cards cannot be too plain. No fancy printing is permissible, nor decoration of any sort whatever. Plain copperplate, guiltless of flourishes, is the only admissible style of lettering.

It is not considered good form to omit 'Mr' or 'Miss' upon a visiting

card. However humble may be one's conception of oneself, this much of concession has to be made to custom. Anyone of sufficiently good social standing to use a visiting card must put some sort of indicatory title before the name.

With invitation cards, except those for weddings, the same simplicity is the rule. A large, plain card, glazed, but not highly glazed, measuring just the number of inches either way that enables it to fit into an ordinary square envelope, bears the hostess's name in copperplate, her address, and R.S.V.P., with lines for filling in the date, the hour, and the character of the entertainment.

Above the hostess's name is a space for that of the person to be invited.

I have seen gilt-edged invitation cards! This seems like doing honour to one's own entertainment; just as using gilt-edged correspondence cards have the appearance of doing honour to one's own communications. There is no such implication in using note-paper of the best. That is merely doing honour to one's correspondents —a very different thing.

Perhaps a word on doing up newspapers may not be amiss. The neat way is to have a white wrapper just the size of the paper when folded, and to tie this very firmly round with a piece of fine, strong string—*not* a stout piece of box-cord! I have seen

most unsuitably strong string tied round a newspaper, strong enough to bind some of the poor prisoners and captives mentioned in it.

But though a neat white wrapper is the best way, it is quite permissible to send to a friend a paper merely tied round with fine, strong string, the address legibly written on the blank space usually to be found on either side of the title.

In preparing magazines for the post one must have sufficient social conscience to remember the poor postman whose duty it is to deliver them. It is not kind to do up together two or three fat weeklies, making a kind of cylinder, difficult to carry and impossible to get into any letter-box, even the most liberal; this is one of the directions in which one has to educate one's social conscience.

There are many others!

It is a distinct rudeness to underpay any postal parcel, whether letter, paper, magazine or packet. The reason of the rudeness is that it convicts the sender of carelessness. Carelessness argues indifference, and indifference proves that the sender holds very lightly the opinion of the sendee (to coin a word)!

A *Post Office Guide* costs a penny, and the amount of information that it gives is well worth that coin of the realm. Why is there not one in every house? The result of a little study of this small volume

would be pregnant of comfort to many.

The Parcels Post is a boon to many, but how its privileges are abused is known only to the Post Office officials themselves. There are certain restrictions as to dimensions, contents, etc., which should be observed.

The security of the fastenings should be seen to. The clearness of the address should be considered. But Post Office records show that hundreds of letters and parcels every year fail of delivery owing to the almost incredible carelessness of the writers or senders. Large sums of money are posted without either name or address on the envelope, or even an address inside to which they may be returned. Articles of value are sent, imperfectly addressed, never inquired for, or the labels are so affixed that they fall off, and the contents of the parcels in course of time become the property of the Post Office, which sells the goods by auction.

Notes play a very considerable part in the list of our social duties. There is an art in the writing of notes, and one that is to be learned chiefly from the dictates of a kind heart and a sympathetic disposition.

For instance, we hear accidentally that a friend is ill with influenza and unable to leave the house. We must not go to see her lest we might bring the infection home with us, and who

could prophesy with what result? But we can sit down at once and write a sympathetic note, asking if we can be of use in any way, and if our friend has an interesting book to read; if not, offering to send her one.

This will serve to remind the invalid that one, at least, of her friends is thinking of her during her illness, and it is a heart-warming experience to receive a really affectionate note when we are feeling a little dull and lonely.

When an accident occurs to any member of a family, the other members may safely be set down as enduring considerable anxiety. To any special friend among them an amiable girl or woman will at once write a little note, expressing her sense of sympathy and asking if she would be in the way if she were to call.

It is not at all the kindest thing to do to rush off to the house of one's friend in such circumstances as these. The whole family is sure to be in some disorder, and if the case is serious and a professional nurse engaged, the house has to be kept as quiet as possible for her daily sleep of six hours. In these circumstances a note is far kinder than a call.

There is much in the manner, as well as the matter, of such notes as these. Some of them, though dictated by the kindest of motives, are dry and even abrupt to the point of harshness. Others, even though composed of but

a few words, are charged with the very spirit of sympathy.

It is not always the most sympathetic individuals who manage to write the most sympathetic notes. But it is an accomplishment that should be cultivated.

In high Society the note is most important. Practice makes it easy, and it is dashed off in a few moments. A note making or confirming an appointment cannot be too precise about the place, the day, the hour.

'I will call for you at 2.30 on Tuesday of next week (the 6th).'

Here is everything in a couple of lines. But how many people omit to be precise in such matters?

Owing to a sort of mental slovenliness that is only too common, the matter is shuffled off into the back of the mind, and not until the inconvenience resulting from such a course has been felt does the idle woman realise how easily it could have been prevented.

Sometimes one will find in a note some such sentence as the following:

'We may as well meet at the station.'

'There is a train at ——. We must not miss it, as they will send to meet us at the other end.'

The intention of the writer has been to fill in the blank space afterwards, when she had looked out the train in question in the railway guide.

Another not infrequent omission is that of an enclosure. 'I enclose his

address,' or 'I enclose the prospectus.' One turns the note over and over, and vainly examines the envelope. There is no enclosure! How many times does this happen? One cannot be too careful in sending off one's notes, so that the recipient may be spared all inconvenience or annoyance. It is one of the things in which the politeness of good breeding is most distinctly displayed.

When we write a note to a friend asking her for some information, the query should be put with the utmost distinctness and clearness. Very often the friend has to write first to find out exactly what it is that is required. And this sort of tax on friendship is of almost daily occurrence. Acquaintances who live in the country are apt to be excessively vague in their commissions to friends in town.

'I've forgotten the name of the shop; but you will be sure to know it. It has blouses in the window, and is either in Oxford Street or Bond Street or Regent Street. You can't miss it.'

Can't you?

I had a note from a country friend not long ago, in which she said, 'Do forgive me for troubling you about it, but will you, the next time you are anywhere near Charing Cross, call in at a silversmith's there (I have quite forgotten the name), and buy for me a crumb-scoop that I particularly ad-

mired when I was last in town? The man will remember.'

'*The man will remember.*'

These remarkable words simmered in my brain while I was calling on all the numerous silversmiths near Charing Cross. In a little country town such as that near which my friend lives the man might possibly remember, but it would be a most unlikely occurrence in a London shop in one of the busiest parts of town.

That is the sort of vague, raw commission that one's country cousins bestow upon one. The writer of a note ought to do all the brain work for the person to whom she writes. Addresses, patterns, prices, quantity and every incidental particular should be set down as clear as daylight. To neglect any one of these items is to be guilty of bad manners.

The note accompanying a wedding present should be made a vehicle of conveying the expression of the donor's congratulations and good wishes. There are many graceful ways of writing such a note, and there are a few ungraceful ways. It seems a pity that anyone should adopt one of the latter, but there are persons in the world who seem fated to say and write just the wrong thing. It is an extraordinary kind of upside-down instinct with which they seem to be endowed.

Apropos of congratulations, an Irishwoman of very humble position

managed to convey in very few words an extremely neat double compliment to a bride and bridegroom whose acquaintance she made in the character of an old retainer of the bride's family.

She looked at the bridegroom and she said to the bride, 'You done well.' Then, turning to the bride, but looking at the bridegroom, she said to the former, 'An' *you* done well!' In this way she managed eloquently enough to imply that she considered each one of the contracting parties to have shown conspicuously excellent taste. Could anyone have put it more cleverly?

Congratulations are sometimes too fervidly put. When, for instance, the bride is a little past the bloom of youth and brightness, it is well for her friends and acquaintances not to be too gushingly insistent with their congratulations. To be so is rather to suggest that she has been successful against terrible odds.

I shall never forget the pleased look of a certain *fiancée* who, rather weary of being congratulated as if she had never been expected to become engaged, was greeted in the following words at a large party given by her parents to make the bridegroom-expectant known to their friends,—

'So you've made your choice at last, you hard-to-please young woman!'

Her face lighted up in a wonderful

way. It was quite true that she had had many offers, and refused them all until the moment of her engagement; but of this the mass of her acquaintances knew nothing.

She was not the sort of woman to boast of 'conquests'—odious word in such a connection.

Society, for some illogical reason, snubs the woman who has reached the age of twenty-eight or so without marrying. Society never stays to ask if it is her own doing, but at once sets it down to her failure to secure attentions leading to marriage. And yet it is the very nicest and sweetest of women who always say 'No' before they are asked; they never let a man humiliate himself by making a proposal when, by means of manner, they can prevent it.

Notes written to young men, thanking them for some little service —a book or song procured, or an address found and forwarded, or information as to trains, boats, hotels, or other incidents of travelling—can scarcely be too short. They should never contain a question. A question implies a wish for a reply. Some foolish girls lead young men into a long correspondence in this way.

Out of politeness they reply to the questions and find themselves involved in a semi-sentimental correspondence, sometimes kept up for years. This kind of thing often gives rise to reports of engagements when the man

may have every reason to wish that some other girl may know him to be perfectly free to lay his heart and hand and banking account at her feet.

And sometimes it is a girl who finds herself engaged in a correspondence from which she sees no means of freeing herself without rudeness.

VIII

AMERICAN *v.* ENGLISH ETIQUETTE

I CAME across a number of replies to correspondents the other day in an American magazine, and as they illustrate a few of the radical differences between American and English etiquette, some remarks upon them may interest my readers.

Take, for instance, the answer to 'Sady':

'It is unnecessary for a girl to offer refreshments to a man who calls to see her.' This reminds us that American girls receive callers on their own account, their father and mother not even entering the room while the young men are paying a visit, unless specially asked by their daughter to be present.

These callers often stay till late in the evening, when the other members of the family have gone to bed.

These customs might lead us English, whose ways are so different, to imagine that in the States there is not the same sentiment of delicate respect for girls and women that men of the cultivated classes are supposed to entertain in our little island.

The contrary is the fact, however. American women are far more highly thought of by American men, are more deferred to, and take a much more exalted position than we do.

The pre-eminence of women over men in the United States is an acknowledged fact. In married life the wifely submission inculcated by St Paul is much less in evidence than it is in England. Wives do far more as they like in America. They make their own plans, and their husbands defer to them. There is much more respect shown to American wives by their husbands than seems to be the case over here.

Englishmen are apt to regard their wives as so literally a part of themselves that they treat them with a sort of unceremonious carelessness. Which of us, observing a man and woman together and conjecturing the relationship they bear each other, has not said or thought: 'They cannot be married. The man is far too polite'?

Of course there are exceptions to this rule. Many an Englishman is as polite to his wife, as careful of her comfort, as assiduous in his attentions as he is to other women; but the general rule is in the other direction.

In America the wife appears to command more respect. The whole sex is more honoured and looked up to than here in England.

There must be a fault somewhere

among us to account for this lack of observance.

Can it be our own? Are we too careless on our own part—too apt to show that we are bored, or cross, or indifferent? If so, this would account for much.

'Englishmen are not so easy to manage as American men,' says the clever author of *American Wives and English Husbands;* and again, 'I feel satisfied that there are no two peoples on earth so unlike.'

If so, the difference may account for what is puzzling in the contrast of marital manners, English and American.

A week or two since an English lady and an American friend of hers were shopping at the cheap sales. Looking at her watch, the Englishwoman said, 'Oh, I must go at once. Charley will be home at six and he hates me to be out when he gets in.'

'But,' said her friend, 'we have not finished. Let him wait for once.'

'No, no!' said the Englishwoman. 'I must really go. He will be so cross and disagreeable if he gets home before me.'

'Well!' remarked the American, 'the way you English lie down and worship your husbands and let them walk over you is something past understanding. No American would submit to such tyranny.'

'But,' explained the Englishwoman, 'I rather like Charley to miss me when I am not at home.'

'Can't you see, you nice, dull, dear woman,' responded the American, 'that that is the very way to make him properly appreciate you. If you are always there when he gets home, how can he contrast the pleasure of finding you there with the disagreeable experience of not finding you there? Look at my husband! That dear man has my company at home for about seven months out of the twelve. And isn't he thankful when he gets it! Isn't he, just! I suppose, if you English wives wanted to travel you would not dare to leave home for a few months, as I do every year. And yet, believe me, that is the way to make a husband appreciate one.'

It is a different idea of wifely duty from ours. And who can say that it is not a better one? Judging from results, it certainly seems to lift woman upon a higher plane and to secure for her an amount of consideration and deference that she by no means always commands in England, no matter how faithfully and conscientiously she may discharge her home duties.

To quote again from Miss Gertrude Atherton's well-known novel *American Wives and English Husbands*, the following is supposed to be spoken by an Englishman: 'You see, an Englishman is certain of several things if he marries a perfectly normal Englishwoman of his own class. She will obey him, her scheme of life will

be his, and, no matter how bright she may be, she will adapt herself to him —which is not the least important point. An Englishman simply cannot adapt himself to anybody. It isn't in him. His wife must adapt herself to him.'

There is much in this American idea of an English husband that must make English readers smile. 'She will obey him!' Well, perhaps 'She will adapt herself to him.' Far more likely that she will, first of all, try her very best to adapt her husband to her. And very probably succeed; for Englishmen are not all cast in one mould, any more than the men of any other nation.

Even before marriage American etiquette deals differently from our own with engaged persons. To judge from another reply to correspondents, it would seem to be a not uncommon custom to send a single invitation to an engaged couple for a party or some other form of entertainment. This is never done here. A separate card is sent to each. Should one of the two be unknown to the host or hostess, it is usual to send a card for him or her to the personal friend to forward. This is a friendly way of accepting the engaged person's acquaintance, and thereby showing kindly attention to one's friend who is engaged.

For instance, a girl friend announces her engagement and says, 'I am so anxious for you to know him.' The

next thing is to organise some sort of entertainment and send the girl a card or note of invitation to forward to 'him.' For a few weeks there will be only one person to whom she cares to apply the pronoun.

IX

A WEDDING IN THE HOUSE

THERE are certain social duties that, by their very nature, occur but seldom in a single experience. For this reason there are details connected with them that float vaguely in the mind of one who has to perform these duties.

They float as queries seeking reply, and until the reply is found their influence is not of a soothing kind. Take, for instance, the mother whose daughter is about to be married, and who has never before had a wedding from her own house. She has forgotten how things were managed when she herself was married. At that time she probably passed the days in an atmosphere of such fuss and fatigue as to know but little of all that her mother had to think of and to do.

For the average bride has a fearfully fatiguing time for the fortnight or three weeks immediately preceding the wedding day. She has gowns to be tried on (usually far too many gowns), endless shopping to do (usually far too much), endless questions from her bridesmaids to answer, presents to receive and ex-

amine, and notes of thanks to write for every one.

Very possibly there are consultations, in addition, as to the furnishing and appointments of the new home. Delightfully interesting work it is, but, at the same time, of a rather exhausting character. I know one young couple who spent three whole days in a large furniture warehouse in Tottenham Court Road. They went there immediately after breakfast, lunched on the premises, and left when the shop was being shut up. On the third day, towards tea-time, the bride began to feel very irritable, so she told me; and the way in which this mood came on was rather dangerous.

'I felt,' she said, 'when I looked at Herbert, that I could not imagine how I had ever thought him good looking. He wore such a commonplace expression as he discussed prices with the shopman that I thought I should like to break off the engagement. But the carpets *were* so sweet! And my boudoir, all rose and grey, *so* delicious! So I said nothing, and after dinner that night Herbert was handsomer than ever.'

Small wonder is it that a disillusioning process sets in when one's whole frame is aching with fatigue and the nerves seem to be on the surface.

What an improvement the afternoon reception is upon the wedding

breakfast, that caused the bride's mother so much trouble in the middle of the century! Those were the days when almost all the preparations were made at home, and the inevitable fuss attendant upon a wedding was supplemented by a great additional amount of work in the kitchen. Even the creams and jellies used to be made at home, and most excellent they usually were, composed of the best materials, and compounded with that refinement of method insured by the active superintendence of the mistress of the house.

The wedding-cake was never made at home in families of the great middle classes. But with that exception and the ices, everything used to be done at home. Now it is all given to a caterer, whether it be breakfast or reception, and the burden that is lifted off the mother is a great one. Financially, the new plan bears rather more weightily upon the father of the family. Especially is this so when the breakfast is chosen in preference to a reception. But the latter is not quite so inexpensive an arrangement as the inexperienced might imagine.

An almost unlimited number of persons are asked to the reception, whereas from thirty to sixty of the most intimate friends of the family were invited to the breakfast. It is true that the costly item of wine is considerably abridged by the change, but even here the saving is by no

means so great as might be imagined. A wedding tea without champagne is considered a shabby affair, and the reason given for thinking it so is that 'everyone wishes to drink the health of the happy couple.'

To want to drink their health at the expense of a heavily-overburdened father is not a very altruistic way of proving one's goodwill; but to hear some people propound this sentiment, one would imagine that champagne was a penitential beverage.

The mother has to arrange in what order the house-party has to be sent to church; who is to go in the carriage with whom; who is to lead whom up the aisle, and what change of partners is to be made in returning. She has to remember the claims of everybody in the matter of precedence; to remind her husband that, though he has to take his daughter up the aisle, it is his duty to bring her, by that time, formally constituted mother-in-law down it; while she herself, accompanying her daughter to church and immediately preceding her up the aisle, has to be brought down again by the bride's father-in-law.

It is these two couples who drive off from church immediately after the bride and bridegroom, whose carriage is called up by the best man directly the signatures are all written in the vestry.

It is often a sad and difficult moment for the bride's mother when she has to

stand and receive the congratulations of her friends, feeling all the time an aching sense of loss; knowing that the sweet freshness of the young companionship is lost to her for ever, and more particularly is this apt to be the case when it is an eldest, or an only, daughter who is married. The eldest is usually the mother's *confidante*, her companion, her right hand, and she feels as if she were losing a part of her very self when she gives her child away to even the worthiest of men.

Sometimes the bride is one of those spoiled, selfish, tyrannical girls of whom the whole household is glad to be rid! This is another view of the case, but one to which it is impossible to close the eyes.

Some years ago a very great lady—socially speaking—married her only daughter to a man of equal position with her own. Her acquaintances condoled with her on the loss of her only girl's society, and the public, reading of the matter in the papers, felt sorry for the widowed woman who was left lonely. But her friends knew better.

What they said was: 'Now that Ella is marrying, her poor mother will begin to enjoy life again.' Or: 'I wonder if the husband knows about Ella's awful temper!' The mother kept her own counsel, and went through the preparations and the ceremony with a quiet, impassive face. Who could tell what she felt? No one.

But since then her life has been her own. She has grown younger and serener with every week of her life, and a quiet happiness shines in her face instead of the look of worry and anxiety that was never absent from it for long while her daughter lived at home.

Such girls as she, let us hope, are exceptions indeed to the general rule. Even the naturally ill-tempered have, as a rule, learned sufficient self-control to make their absence felt as a distinct loss when they go to a home of their own.

It is more often the sons who are spoiled at home, and of whom, when they marry, one says, 'Oh, how I pity the poor girl who marries him!' And yet the mother often grieves more over the marriage of a disagreeable, ill-natured, rough-mannered son than over that of one of the gentlest and most amiable of daughters.

Why is this?

A considerable amount of tact is needed in arranging the wedding presents, which are always on view on the wedding day, either at the residence of the bride's parents or in a room of the hotel or restaurant where the reception is held.

A little circumstance that may prove puzzling to some among the guests is the presence of certain individuals whom one cannot exactly 'place' socially. They are certainly not wedding guests. They stand

about in various attitudes of semi-careless ease, or rather attitudes that suggest an effort to appear at ease. Careless as they look, their eyes are busy enough; for these are detectives whose business it is to guard the presents against thieves.

Members of the 'swell mob' find it easy enough to gain access to a wedding reception, but they do not find it a very easy matter to evade the sharp eyes of these men.

One day when I was at a fashionable wedding, I observed one of the detectives suddenly abandon his lounging attitude near a case where some splendid jewels were displayed, but under lock and key. He rather smartly walked across the room and spoke to another detective, and immediately an eager, alert look came into the second man's face. Becoming interested, I watched proceedings, but after a while the two men resumed their careless pose and nothing occurred. I heard afterwards that two members of the swell mob had entered the room and had been at once identified by the men on guard.

But they themselves were equally quick to observe that detectives were in the place, and after a saunter round they quietly left the room.

'It is always suspicious,' said my informant, 'when persons seem to know no one in the company, and converse with each other only.'

This seems to bear rather hardly on

any guests who are known to but few among the general company.

A long experience has taught me that it is well to be extremely careful about handling jewellery or costly articles, whether at wedding receptions or in shops. The thieves who introduce themselves into private parties and who practise theft in jewellers' shops are among the best dressed, and to all appearance, the best-behaved individuals in London.

It is an important part of their stock-in-trade to be so. And besides this, there are several women—and one or two men—who are of undoubted rank and position, and yet who cannot resist the temptation of pocketing any article of value that they see a chance of appropriating unnoticed. How disagreeable to be taken for one of these, just for lack of a little care!

So I always warn young girls and other inexperienced persons to abstain from touching anything of value. It may seem to some that this is being ultra-careful; but when one thinks how very easy it is to be arrested on a wrong suspicion, owing to mistaken identity, and how extremely disagreeable the consequences may be, I think one is justified in being very cautious in such matters.

In arranging the presents for one's friends to see them, it is usual to have a card with each, on which the donor's name is distinctly written. (The disposition of them should be such that

not even the smallest of the gifts can be overlooked. Some of the humblest of them may have cost the givers more than even the most splendid.)

At some weddings the tables on which the presents are shown are beautifully decorated with flowers. One of the prettiest floral arrangements I have ever seen consisted of smilax, trails of which were disposed round and between the various articles. At another wedding half-blown yellow roses with their green leaves were strewn about the tables. At a wedding where the bride's name was Lily, her name-flowers stood like fairy sentinels in dainty little specimen glasses set about among the presents.

Autumn leaves were used at another wedding, but some of the guests took exception to this, as the wedded couple were somewhat mature!

It is part of the numerous onerous duties of the hostess to see that each guest is invited to go and look at the presents. This comes next in importance to seeing that everyone present is asked to have refreshment.

As to the guests themselves, they may remember that a bride takes precedence of everybody, even Royalty coming after the happy pair as they leave the church. The guests, on reaching the house after the ceremony, immediately go up to the bride and bridegroom and congratulate them, afterwards paying their respects to the hostess and the host.

However hospitable people may be, it is quite certain that on the wedding day of a daughter they cannot feel very sorry to see the guests depart; and it would be a great error in taste to remain after the bulk of the guests had taken their leave. The signal for this is the departure of the bride and bridegroom. Directly they have gone, it is the business of everyone else to go too.

It has of late become the custom for the bride's brothers or cousins to show the wedding guests to their seats in church. This is very much better than leaving this office to the officials of the church, who cannot possibly know the various relationships or degrees of rank or precedence among the guests.

The front pews are always reserved for the parents of the bride and bridegroom, and those immediately behind them for other close relatives. The wives of brothers and the husbands of sisters must be placed as though they were actually sisters and brothers of the bride. It is in *minutiæ* like these that a hostess and her deputies show their *savoir-faire*, and not even the greatest lady in the land escapes criticism if she neglects them. Queen Victoria was most particular as to points of precedence.

A lady who is very highly placed in the world, owing to her husband's diplomatic position, is extremely careless about matters of the sort.

She has also an indifferent manner in receiving her guests, often shaking hands with them with her head turned the other way. It would be difficult to estimate the amount of dislike that this careless lady has managed to attract to herself by her lack of *savoir-faire.*

It is also more than possible that it has had a reflex influence, and not for good, upon her husband's career. It has always been acknowledged that a graceful, tactful and popular wife is of the greatest value to a man who wishes to climb to ambitious heights in statesmanship. The thought is an encouraging one to women who feel confidence in themselves; but it is apt to become an anxious one with those who are of a shy, reserved, retiring disposition, nervous and awkward in Society, inclined to silence for fear of saying the wrong thing when they speak.

No amount of experience seems to shake these quiet, gentle souls out of their reticence. But they are of little help to any man who is bent on making a career for himself.

What a flutter the bride is in when she awakes on the morning of her wedding day! First she looks to see what the weather is like. Next she remembers what a serious thing it is getting married. Then she reflects: 'Well, it is too late now to draw back—even if I wanted to.' And as the morning goes on the

clocks all seem to be racing each other, so quickly speed the hours away.

At last the carriage is at the door with its pair of greys, the wedding finery has been donned, and the carpet has been laid down across the pavement for the due protection of all the bridal whiteness.

Also, it seems, for the advertisement to the whole neighbourhood of what is about to happen, for what will more quickly collect a crowd than a roll of carpet and a carriage with a pair of greys? She has not time to reflect that it is the last time Miss Whatever-her-name-is is going down the steps. It will be Mrs Somebody or Lady Something who will ascend them some three-quarters of an hour later. Off she drives, her father beside her, and afterwards she would be rather puzzled to say what they had talked about, for she is like a girl in a dream. Everything seems vague and cloudy, and this vagueness is considerably helped by hunger, for what bride ever yet made a good breakfast?

The church is almost filled with a fluttering crowd of guests, who await without impatience the arrival of the bride, abundance of pastime being provided by the presence of a number of dearest friends, and the possibility of criticising their looks, their dress and their manner.

'Lady G—— has laid it on extra thick this morning,' says one.

'Yes, and mislaid her background; she is nothing without her background,' is the reply.

'Do you see that pale girl in blue? She is madly in love with the bridegroom. We must not forget to watch her face when he comes out of the vestry.'

'There he is. Look how her face lights up and the colour comes into it.'

'But do you think it is true?'

'What—that she is in love with him? Oh, yes. Major Pendennis told me, and he has all the gossip at his fingers'-ends.'

'Do you like the bridesmaids' dresses?' asks a languid lady of a tall, soldierly man who is leaning against the door of the pew in which she sits.

'H'm—yes. Pretty enough, only for that excessive tightness round the waist. They look as if these belts were tied on as our fellows used to do on a long march, to prevent them feeling too hungry.'

And here the strains of 'The Voice that breathed o'er Eden' announces the arrival of the bride. Tall, fair, perfectly self-possessed, she passes between the two rows of her bridesmaids, smiling her greetings, and the girls fall into order in the procession behind her.

Tears and blushes are out of fashion nowadays. Marriages are conducted less demonstratively than

of old. A sort of subdued hilarity is now the 'correct thing.' It is well. Tears are terribly inconvenient, and the lachrymose woes of a bride have spoiled many a wedding gown. It used some thirty years ago to be remarked with strong disapprobation that widows were the only brides who never wept, and satirical remarks were made as to the effect of tears upon a dress of delicate peach-coloured satin, or soft lavender silk, or upon brocade of that almost forgotten hue once known as French grey.

The motive for dry eyes was supposed to lie in the susceptibility of such materials and colours to the contracting of stains; and the deduction is plain enough—viz., that the tears of brides were, as a rule, quite a voluntary and prearranged display of emotion.

English Society becomes more practical every day, and among other small affectations, these have entirely been swept away.

Silence reigns as the clergyman proceeds with the ceremony. It is a curious fact that women never tire of weddings, and listen intently to every word of the solemn rite, though it may be as familiar to their ears as the Church Litany. They involuntarily conjecture what may be the exact sentiments of the bride and bridegroom as they stand together. They watch every gesture, listen to every tone of the voice, and try to catch

every passing expression of the countenance.

Shrewdly enough they draw their conclusions, or, rather, jump to them, to the frequent amazement of their husbands and brothers, who listen indifferently to what is going on, look carelessly at the principal performers, and feel conscious only of a vague wish that the service were not 'so confoundedly long.'

'She does not care a scrap for him,' whispers a girl to her neighbours. 'She is only thinking of her dress and her pose.'

'That man is indifferent,' says a little lady with quiet blue eyes, which see many things with astounding clearness.

'Why do you think so?'

'Because he never looked at her when she came into the church, nor when he gave her his arm to go into the vestry.'

This is the moment when the bride's individuality begins to assert itself. To walk up the aisle on her father's or brother's arm necessitates no display of 'deportment,' as grace of bearing and manner was once called.

It is a different matter when the newly-made wife has to receive the congratulations of her friends and her husband's relatives. To be self-conscious, and absorbed in her own emotions, is but too general a fault, and though excusable enough, is a

very decided mistake. To be stiff and formal is worse, and the reverse error of too much 'gush' is very 'bad form.'

The ideal bride goes through the ordeal of the vestry-room with a sweet composure and gentle calm that put at their ease the most nervous formulators of congratulations. She thinks more of others than herself, and is one of those gentle souls who, instinctively and without effort, set others at their ease.

Meanwhile, the bridesmaids flutter and rustle round her, chirping like a little crowd of sparrows on a spring day. The flowers they carry fill the air with odour, and the girls themselves are permeated with an intoxicating mingling of emotions. Partly sympathetic with the bride, the major portion of their sensations is fixed, in an anticipatory sense, vaguely upon that coming day of days when each one of them will form the central figure of such a group.

What dreams do not girls dream about their wedding day! How they picture themselves, standing in a cloud of white, beside some dark-eyed Apollo, some tawny-haired Viking, with wealth, youth, love, hope, and troops of friends beckoning them to a future full of pleasure!

The contrast between the real and the ideal is sometimes hard and bitter. Love is often an absentee at a fashionable wedding; or he is

present, but drawing together the hearts which the priest is parting by the sacred words he utters.

Fortunately, there are plenty of marriages in which mutual love reigns paramount. When the young couple go off by themselves on the first stage of the wedding trip they soon forget that they are probably being missed very much in the respective home circles.

The bride is extremely anxious not to look 'honeymoony,' and the bridegroom aids and abets her in this laudable ambition.

They seldom manage to deceive or mislead anybody, however, for though they may have observed every precaution, even to the wearing of rather well-worn gloves and boots, they cannot hide the fact that they are completely and entirely absorbed in each other.

Many an one, observing them, wishes them well from the silent depths of a heart that knows how delightful is young Love while the rainbow yet shines upon his wings.

X

THE NAUGHTY CHILDREN

ONE of our most important social duties is to train up our children so that they shall not be pests and nuisances to everyone they meet. There is an enormous number of badly-brought-up children in the world; and what a pity it seems to spoil these dear little creatures, who ought to be like bits of Heaven itself among us world-weary ones!

A well-bred child is a delightful creature; an ill-bred one is regarded with disgust.

A friend of mine was once much interested in a woman who was dying in very poor circumstances, and was leaving several children unprovided for. My friend's feelings were so wrought upon that she had almost decided to adopt one of these children and bring it up in her own comfortable home.

On her next visit to the sick woman she saw the children for the first time, and within two minutes of doing so, all her charitable intentions took flight, disappeared, and never returned.

The conduct of those small Christians was such as to make her

congratulate herself that she had said nothing about her idea. One, a boy of seven, struck his dying mother with clenched fists. Another, aged three, kicked his brother as the latter lay on the floor in front of the fire, and bestowed a black eye upon him.

The mother saw nothing amiss!

That is what amazes me! The mother never sees anything amiss. She will watch her offspring running up and down a railway carriage, catching hold of the knees of other passengers with fingers all sticky with buns or bonbons, and never a word will she say to put an end to it.

Surely it is our business to see that our children behave at least as considerately to others as we would ourselves. But the ordinary idea in a mother's mind seems to be that such angels as her children are must be appreciated by everyone, no matter how badly they behave. But this is far from being the case.

The loveliest child in the world becomes a nuisance if permitted to do always exactly what it likes.

'Oh, that detestable child!' Are we not familiar with the expression?

Hotels seem to be the happy hunting ground of the naughty child, both in England and out of it. This dreadful little plague has a way of tyrannising over everybody that makes everyone feel ashamed of it except its own mother, the being usually responsible for turning a

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possibly sweet and charming little being into the very reverse.

Invalids are particularly susceptible to the tyranny of these little creatures.

'How do you like the hotel?' we asked a friend who was abroad for her health.

'It is an excellent hotel,' she replied, 'but I fear I shall have to leave it. That child—do you see her? she is sitting with her mother at tea—that child sleeps in the same corridor as I do, and she screams herself to sleep every night, and runs up and down the corridor shrieking and laughing at seven o'clock every morning, just when I feel most sleepy.'

'Why not ask the landlady to speak to her parents?' we suggested.

'No, no,' replied our poor friend. That nice-looking old lady over there did so and the child's parents have been extremely rude to her ever since, talking at her and making sarcastic observations about "old maids." I shall just leave quietly when I have found some other hotel.'

And she did.

Few people actually realise what an all-pervading tyranny is that of spoiled children. People dread and fear them. And the annoying part of it is that the misguided parents are perfectly complacent. They see plainly enough that their children inconvenience and annoy many people, but all their blame is bestowed upon the latter for objecting

to any attentions that the children may like to bestow upon them.

It is such a witty thing for a child to pour the contents of the cream jug into the hat of one of her mother's guests! The mother can scarcely leave off laughing long enough to apologise — such a barren, empty, perfunctory apology! The gentleman who owns the hat does not own sufficient humour to see the joke.

Some years ago we were at a children's party at the house of an eminent artist, among whose guests were some well-known people.

The child of one of these absolutely spoiled the party. She happened to discover rather early in the evening that it was the intention of her parents to send her home to bed with her nurse while they would remain an hour or two longer.

She screamed, she kicked, she yelled, until she got her father to take her on his knee and her mother to sit holding her feet!

This touching picture made everybody turn away to indulge in a quiet laugh; but with some of us it turned to indignation when we heard the mother 'faithfully promising' that she and the father would go home with the child, then smuggling her into the carriage with the nurse and come running up the garden-path gleefully tittering at the success of their ruse, while their deceived little girl was borne screaming home and learning

an early lesson of deceit and hypocrisy.

Who could feel surprised that the child grew up to be the terror of the many friends of her family? Or that other children, her brothers and sisters, brought up on a similar plan, proved as great nuisances as she had done?

It is pure selfishness that makes parents indulge their children. They wish the little ones to be dotingly fond of them, and they think this indiscriminate spoiling a good means to that end.

It is a terrible mistake! Children love far more dearly those whom they can respect and trust. At a very early age they find out the weakness that yields at a threat of tears or shouts, and they play upon it, and lose all respect for persons whom they can so easily manage. They may love them, but it is in a contemptuous sort of way, incompatible with true affection.

'Well, did you enjoy your visit to the Blanks?' a young man was asked. His reply was: 'Blank himself is a good fellow, and they have a charming place.

'I fully intended stopping with them the full fortnight they asked me for, but those children! Egad! I never saw such children! There was no peace for them.

'A fellow couldn't read, couldn't smoke, couldn't talk! It was such a

confounded nuisance that I quietly wired to Bob to send me an urgent wire summoning me back to town.'

'But did not Blank try to stop them?'

'Not he, poor fellow! It is the wife that spoils them, and he suffers as much as anybody, but dare not say a word. She called him "cruel" for wanting the children to stop a noisy game because of a lady who was ill next door.'

'My children have such high spirits!' proudly remarked the mother of five little torments who made the house a wretched place.

'High spirits!' Almost every child has high spirits, but it is true kindness on the part of mothers to train them to enjoy these animal spirits in a well-bred way.

Practical jokes are generally detestable, but seldom more so than when played by children upon their elders.

Little do parents realise what misery they are storing up both for themselves and their spoiled children by such weak indulgence as they too often display! A child who has never been taught self-control or consideration for others will seldom learn, when older, to rule his spirit or to act unselfishly.

All his early training makes for self-indulgence, and it will probably render his life a miserable failure.

Or, lacking the gentle guidance he should have had in his youth, he has to learn his lesson in the hard school of the world—such a bitter lesson!

So that it is not only good manners that should induce us to bring up our children to be gentle, considerate and polite to all, but our very affection for them should induce us to do so.

There are houses at which some of us dread to visit, because of the badly-behaved children we know we shall meet there. They have us at their mercy, for the young things know as well as we do that we should never say a word about our sufferings to their mother or father. Devoid of good manners themselves, these young philosophers reckon upon this excellent accomplishment in others.

And how many fathers, think you, dear and gentle readers, are there who find home an intolerable place, owing to the unruly children who are allowed to do exactly as they like, and to ride rough-shod over everyone in the house, from master, mistress, and unhappy tutor or governess down to the page or kitchenmaid.

Yes! How many?

It is ill work spoiling the dear children, and it does not even make them happy—quite the reverse. And into what disagreeable, horrid young men and young women they develop! It is really a gross neglect of one's social duties to bring up one's youngsters to be such pests to Society as one too often meets.

Our special business is with the girls, therefore let us pass by on the other side the failings of the egoistic young

man. We may possibly free our minds on the subject some other day. It would be a congenial task.

Watch the young woman in her mother's house. Her one idea—her one resolution—is to enjoy herself. Had she not been spoiled as a child she would take a more altruistic view of her duties in life. She eagerly seizes upon her own pleasures, caring nothing to help others to enjoyment. And if she only knew it, the pleasure of helping others to little bits of happiness is far greater and more enduring than that secured by clutching at our own.

It is when on one's travels that one comes across fine opportunities for studying the spoiled girl. What a slave she makes of her too indulgent mother! It makes one inwardly rage with wrath to hear the horrid creature order her mother about and speak to her in a tone of contemptuous indifference such as no one of breeding would use to any human being. She calmly takes the best seats on boat or in railway carriage without for a moment consulting the wishes of any other member of her party. Instead of being bright and companionable, she buries herself in her book. When interrupted for a moment and asked to pass some article to her mother, she does it with a bad grace and with a gesture of impatience and ill-temper, sometimes with a muttered exclamation to match.

How different is the behaviour of the well-bred girl! She never dreams of preceding her mother into an hotel, a railway carriage, or anywhere else, but always draws back to make way for her, and also for any other of her elders. I can always tell in a moment, on such occasions, which girls are gentlewomen at heart and which are not.

Girls little guess how much they tell about themselves, unconsciously, by their behaviour in the street, when they walk along without paying the smallest attention to the convenience or the ordinary rights of other pedestrians. We can sum them up pretty well. Take, for instance, the girl who carries her umbrella or sunshade with the knob pointing out at an angle over her left shoulder.

Hundreds of those she meets, finding themselves threatened with a nasty blow, disapprove of her at once. Scores do not content themselves with disapproval, but let it run on into active dislike.

Make a note of it, please! Do not carry your umbrella in your arms like a baby; if you do you are likely to be as universally condemned as the thoughtless men who carry theirs horizontally, the ferule at the back being a veritable weapon of offence.

To walk three abreast on the pavement is not very considerate, unless the latter should happen to be unusually wide. To talk and laugh

very loudly in the street are signs of ill-breeding, but they are less objectionable, in a way, than anything that interferes more actively with the comfort or convenience of other wayfarers, such as taking the wrong side of the road, lounging along in threes, and thus getting in the way of busy people, and making dashes across the pavement at interesting shop-windows, to the consternation of those behind who were not expecting such sudden movements.

In shopping there are grand opportunities of displaying good breeding or the reverse. I have often noticed that the higher the rank of the lady who is shopping, the more civil and considerate she is to the assistants who serve behind the counter. The harsh, imperative, disagreeable mode of speaking belongs to the woman or girl who fancies—oh, how wrongly!—that she is giving proof of her social superiority by a tone of command.

The true gentlewoman speaks quietly, gently, unassumingly, and does not cry aloud her wants or her opinions, which have no interest for anyone but herself and the girl who is serving her. A quiet 'thank you' or 'good morning' to the young man or young woman who has been serving one is not in the least likely to detract from one's claims to be a lady—quite the contrary.

Some girls seem actually afraid to

be civil, lest it might be imagined that their social status is not above that of the individual to whom the civility is addressed. But girls who have been well brought up are civil to everybody, even to the poor man who sweeps a crossing, and the maid who hands them their plate at lunch or dinner.

I have seen girls shopping look so scornfully at, and speak so disagreeably to, those who serve them that I have at once entertained a decided sentiment of dislike for them. The life of a shopgirl is quite hard enough without having to endure incivility as well. The very fact that a girl is unable to resent any rudeness should secure her against it, and would do so with any person of good feeling.

I once heard a woman, who was dressed as a lady, say to a shopgirl who had stated some fact in connection with her wares: 'Oh, yes, you say so, but how am I to know it's true?' The poor girl turned scarlet, but kept silence in face of the insult. She was much better bred than the customer.

One of the first lessons that mothers try to teach their children is that of self-control. It is the very alphabet of good manners. Without it, no one can be really polite. If we all, when annoyed or peevish, were to say the first sharp words that occurred to us, what a state of hot water our families would always be in!

It is part of our social duty—and

a very important part—to control the expression of irritability and cultivate that 'cheerful stoicism' which Carlyle, who had none of it, was the first to recognise as admirable in the members of our well-bred classes with whom he was acquainted.

He would have secured some measure of domestic happiness if he had cultivated that quality in himself; but whenever he was annoyed he broke out into raging adjectives, and freed his mind in the most thoroughly complete fashion of his opinions on the subject.

Who that has read it can ever forget his letter on the shortcomings of a tailor who had sent home to him a coat that did not fit? The language would not have been exaggerated if it had been addressed to a murderer and an incendiary.

Good breeding helps us wonderfully through life, for the world has a way of reflecting back to us the face with which we regard it. If we are rude, we shall be met with rudeness. If civil and polite, we shall receive civility and consideration. If we are sullen and harsh, we may vainly expect others to turn bright and sunny looks upon us.

Whenever I hear people perpetually complain of the rudeness and incivility they encounter I always conclude, in the recesses of my mind, that they must be in the habit of presenting an aggressive, disagreeable manner to the world.

XI

MANNER

THERE is no greater test of good breeding than the manner in which we behave to those who socially hold poorer positions. As a journalist I have had occasion to converse with people of every grade, from Royalty to the most lowly workers, the match-girls at Bethnal Green, the poor flower-girls in the street. Between these extremes many strata of the social formation are represented, and it is my experience that the higher the rank the more gentle and courteous is the manner. Of course, there are exceptions to every rule, and there are, no doubt, princesses and duchesses who signally fail in good breeding, just as there are *nouvelles riches* who are absolutely gentlewomen at heart and who are incapable of speaking roughly to anyone.

But, allowing for exceptions, I have found that the great ladies, whose birth has been such as to suit them for the high position they hold, are among the kindest and politest of human beings; whereas the women whose husbands have made money in

business, and in that way exalted their wives to rank and riches—perhaps one or other, perhaps both—are haughty of mien and far from agreeable in manner and aspect.

Oddly enough, it is these very women who fawn and cringe, stoop and truckle, to their social superiors. The two faults go together, just as do cowardice and bullying. One day I had an opportunity of contrasting the manner of such a woman as I have described, when conversing with a lady of high rank and one whom she considered her inferior. The former was a well-known Marchioness, and, as she unexpectedly entered the room, my lady of the mushroom wealth assumed an extraordinarily humble expression in ludicrously sudden contrast to that her face had worn a moment before. Her voice was so altered that I scarcely recognised it, and when the lady of higher rank held out her hand, the other pounced upon it with a hungry, eager look.

When that great lady also shook hands with the individual whom the *parvenue* had before been diligently snubbing, the lightning flash of astonishment appeared in the eyes of the spectator.

Then she, too, taking her cue from the Marchioness, assumed a politeness that seemed as easily doffed and donned as a summer cape.

This sort of thing shows the worst of ill-breeding. One cannot to one-

self be true if one has to change one's face in this hypocritical fashion.

Some girls and women have a very rude and hectoring way of speaking to servants. I have often thought that this very mistaken piece of bad manners may account for some of the servant difficulty we are experiencing. Why should we not all remember what we have heard about the behaviour of Queen Victoria to the domestics of Her Majesty's household. The royal *châtelaine* had a kind word for everyone in her service, knew the circumstances of almost everyone employed, and sympathised in their joys and sorrows. The absolute adoration entertained by them in return for our late good and dear Queen must be witnessed to be believed. Most of the Royal servants would have been ready to lay down their lives for their kind-hearted mistress.

What an example this is of the relations that should subsist between employer and employed in a household! But someone may say that it is easy for a Queen to be *débonnaire* and pleasant with her servants, since Majesty need have no fear of presumption in return. There is a happy medium, however, between the cold hauteur that keeps all at a distance and the easy familiarity which invites impertinence. Some women seem absolutely incapable of achieving this medium.

When visiting at the house of an

acquaintance not long since, I was very much disgusted with the tone and manner used by the grown-up daughter of the house to a young governess who had charge of the younger ones. 'Miss ——, go and fetch my handkerchief,' she said, and Miss —— very meekly went. And, again, when the girl returned saying she could not find it, the other remarked in a testy tone, 'You could not have looked for it properly.' The poor young governess grew very red at being spoken to in this way, and before strangers too. As a matter of fact, she was by birth of much higher social rank than her employers; but that is now of such frequent occurrence that is scarcely calls for remark.

In a charming book entitled *My Father and I*, the author says: 'One of the peculiarities of the days of my youth which made it so different to the present time was that a young lady never had any contact but with her equals. The extraordinary promiscuity of modern existence—travelling, tramways, large shops, etc.—was ignored. Even to such places as the exhibitions (1862), five-shilling days were selected to avoid the crush. Reserve, gentle manners, susceptibility to everything coarse or gross were thus naturally cultivated. The idea of mounting on a 'bus would have been as strange to me as that of climbing the Himalayas. I looked at such things, and at vulgar

people in general, from a distance, without any sort of pride, but removed from them by a dispensation of Providence. I felt, as it were, safe within a charmed circle.'

Yes! A wave of democracy has swept over the land since those old days of forty years ago. Even then people had begun to talk of the strange fusion of classes and the washing away of the positive line of demarcation that had once clearly defined ladies of quality from others.

But have not women of birth and breeding gained, rather than lost, by the change? It was all very well to be fenced in from contact with the crowd, set apart in a sort of guarded solitude. It was a beautiful ideal to set the well-born women safe and high from reach of harm or touch of impurity that might sully the outer edge of their garments. But it was not life. The faculties were but half employed. Dulled, deadened, blunted, the energies were turned in upon themselves, and, lacking outlet, they became stagnant, sometimes foul. Nature intended us to live at all points, not to fold our arms and half close our eyes. And as for breeding, what was that breeding worth which esteemed everything beyond the circle of one's social sphere as common and unclean?

A celebrated man used to say that the best-bred people were those who had intimately associated with all

classes, and who had emerged from the contact without either fulsomeness to superiors or condescension to inferiors. The girl who is neither flattered nor fluttered when called upon to speak to those far above her in rank is probably the very girl who will be polite and considerate to those below her.

There are some who, in the presence of their superiors, adopt a defiant, abrupt manner, conveying an 'I'm as good as you' sort of sentiment. But that is just the girl who will look down on those below her, and suspect them of daring to think they are 'as good as she is,' condemning them for it in her heart. This strange contradiction may often be observed and in other matters than those of manners. The girl who has some pet affectation is always the first to detect a kindred weakness in another and to 'jump on her' for it. The woman who likes playing practical jokes is the first to resent one played on her. We are bundles of inconsistencies, and should make every allowance for each other. If we had no inconsistency about us we should either be angels or—very detestable!

Someone may ask for a definition of the word 'Manner,' and it would not be exactly an easy thing to supply one. Manner has, ultimately, far more effect on all who approach us than even good looks or graceful bearing.

It repels or attracts, disgusts or invites, and is more indicative of self than even the expression of the face. That can be controlled and made null and void, but the manner conveys a quantity of information to everyone who wishes for it.

'What a charming manner!' How often we hear the phrase spoken of both men and women. True it is that charm of manner makes a way in life for the possessor, and is next best as a 'letter of recommendation' to a fine countenance. Charles Lamb said of someone that he was 'awkward in his face.' Manner includes the very opposite of that, with voice and bearing in complete harmonious accord with the pleasant expression of the face. A quiet sobriety of movement in the features is one of the essentials of a good manner.

Even a chronic frown is less displeasing than a resident smile, which first wearies, then annoys the beholder. This permanent smile soon comes to mean no more than a mere contraction of the muscles. It is not really a smile, which means a ray of sunshine from the heart or spirit.

Strangely enough, it is very often bad-tempered persons who wear a constant smile. It frequently accompanies those strongly-marked lines on the forehead that signify irritability and that sudden sort of disposition which has been likened to fire and tow.

The regulation smile very frequently goes with the gushing manner, which is all froth and outside show. In vain do we look for a residuum from it, anything substantial and tangible. It is a syllabub, and, after all, it is not everyone who cares for syllabubs.

The really charming manner has a delightful repose about it, the quietude of true gentleness. The possessor seems as deeply interested in each interlocutor as she would be in her own concerns. The good listener has invariably a good manner.

The intent and kindly look, as far removed from restlessness as from indifference, reassures the speaker, and leads her on from confidence to confidence.

It is excessively rude to interpolate remarks when anyone is speaking. It may seem unnecessary to make this observation, but anyone who has marked the deterioration of modern manners will feel that it is not superfluous to make the comment. The girl or woman of charming manner never commits such a fault as this; not even when it is 'only' her brother or her husband who is speaking. It is most irritating to be interrupted, not only on account of the interruption itself, but because of the flagrant rudeness that inspires it. A feeling of resentment is always engendered by deliberate rudeness, quite apart from the results of the latter.

For instance, if a girl fails to find a

partner for one of her mother's guests at a dance, yet dances herself, the other girl never forgets the rudeness, even though she may secure a partner after all. Very often the distinction fails to be properly drawn between rudeness and its results.

A girl who has omitted some bit of self-evident politeness, such as in the incident referred to above, would say: 'Well, she need not bear me any grudge, for she danced the waltz after all.' But that she had done so makes not the slightest difference in the ill-manners of the other girl.

There is a charm of manner that manages to gloss over such shortcomings as those indicated above. Even interruptions can be so skilfully made with a pretty smile and a soft 'Excuse me,' and a manner sweet and caressing, that the person who might have been offended is, on the contrary, flattered and delighted. Almost anything is possible to the possessor of a good manner.

How annoyed we feel when someone pushes against us in the street, perhaps butting us with an unwieldy parcel or treading on our toes. If no apology is made, the recipient of these attentions feels the liveliest resentment and momentarily detests the awkward person who has been the cause of inconvenience or damage.

But if the latter begs pardon with a voice full of regret, and earnestly hopes that one is not very much hurt,

the grievance disappears as if by magic, and even the inconvenience itself appears to become palpably smaller.

The apologist may be, at heart, quite as careless about the results of his awkwardness as the man who neglects to apologise; but that is just where the charm of manner steps in, making all the difference in the world to the person addressed.

I once heard a lady say to another lady, 'Yes, I am inclined to like her, but she has rather too much manner.' With some curiosity, after this remark, I found myself in company with the person criticised. She certainly had too much manner. She turned her head sideways and back again, looked up and cast her eyes down, gesticulated with both hands, dramatically suited her tone of voice to the subject of her remarks, and almost curveted in her progress from one end of the room to the other as she made her adieux.

'How tired that lady's eyelids must be!' was the observation of a small girl who had sat watching her with all the rapt—and occasionally rude—intentness of the very young. Tired they must have been! They flickered and fluttered and scarcely rested for a single moment.

One day, at a railway station, I had another opportunity of studying a florid manner. We were all waiting for a train that was very late. A girl was walking up and down the plat-

form accompanied by two young men, one on either side of her. She smiled and laughed and chattered as any other girl might do, but the accompaniment of nods and becks and wreathed smiles, of arched eyebrows and bending neck, with playful tappings of a large fan she carried, of mincing steps and giggling twists of the body away from either man in turn, made up a remarkable development of manner that attracted all eyes upon her.

It was an apotheosis of the florid style, and more especially when she handed one of her companions the fan and took from the other a large sunshade, which she proceeded to twist and twirl and swing about in the same restless fashion as she had twirled and twisted herself.

At each end of the platform she turned with a sort of pirouetting movement and a whirl of skirts like that of a skirt dancer.

What a lesson in manners she was! I have never forgotten her, though it must be at least ten years since she walked up and down that platform in the sunshine and thoroughly enjoyed herself.

Girls and women cannot be too quiet in manner when in public. Anything loud or pronounced appears intended to attract attention, and as such it is taken by most men, and sometimes acted upon to the great distress and even terror of the girls themselves.

A pleasant manner without efflorescence or restlessness is one of the marks of good breeding.

There is an indifferent, icily stoical manner which is not incompatible with a certain order of good breeding, but which has a very unpleasant effect upon the observer. It seems to be the aim of some women to be as much like automata as they can well be. They pass through the world with as little display of emotion as possible. There is something inhuman about them. They will see the most touching incidents without a gleam of feeling betraying itself in their faces. They are utterly irresponsive to those touches of nature that make the whole of the rest of the world kin. They cannot realise how this demeanour chills off the rest of the world from them. What we are is supposed to be portrayed in what we seem. What we seem is reflected back to us by the world. If our manner is unsympathetic, the world will present an unsympathetic face to us. To a genial manner it responds in a genial way. If we are pleasant to others the great majority will be pleasant to us. And the importance of cultivating an agreeable manner is great.

For does it not scatter a little gleam of pleasure wherever it is felt, and, in addition, produce an agreeable response, which, in its turn, sheds its own bright influence about it?

XII

LADIES' CLUBS

THE handsome clubs for ladies that prosper in London answer the old question, 'Are women clubbable?' We are gregarious, quite as much as men, and even more sociable in some ways.

Before such an institution was thought of ladies who came to town for a day's shopping had but an uncomfortable time of it. We will suppose that a mother and daughter came from Weybridge or Windsor, intent on crowding a quantity of business into some six hours, and eager to complete it all so that a second venture of the kind should be unnecessary.

About two o'clock they were thirsty, hungry and tired, and either muddy or dusty, either cold or hot. They went to the pastry-cook's or an hotel for luncheon. Now a pastry-cook's is a delightful place to small boys and girls. There are, in fact, some big boys and girls who regard these establishments with very great favour. I remember, looking down the long-past years, when I myself desired no better nourishment than a sticky

bun, a flabby jam-roll, or a crumbly cheesecake.

But times change, and we change with them. There is something about the all-pervading odours of a pastry-cook's that reduces the average grown-up appetite to that uncomfortable condition known to certain strata of Society as 'a sinking,' unaccompanied, alas! by any desire to eat or to drink in order to relieve oneself of the sensation.

It is impossible to rest with any comfort upon the narrow-seated, straight-backed chairs; the mud or dust remains, failing means to get rid of it; the aching head is distracted with the constant clatter of plates (curious that only the cultured or carefully trained can handle such things noiselessly); the tea tastes bitter and boiled; and, to crown all, there are people waiting for the reversion of one's seat, making one feel it a sacred duty to eat, drink, pay and disappear within the shortest time possible.

The Club for Ladies has worked a beneficent change in all this. How delightful it is to sink down upon one of the soft couches in the cool, shady drawing-room in summer, or to lie back in a cosy chair near the fire in winter, and to close the tired eyes for half-an-hour's needful repose! Shopping is almost as exhausting an occupation as looking at exhibitions of pictures.

Then, when refreshed, one descends to a comfortable little luncheon in the dining-room, daintily served on a snowy cloth, which contrasts pleasantly with the crumb-strewn, glass-marked marble at the pastry-cook's.

By this time one has paid a visit to the splendidly-fitted dressing-room, where are hair-brushes, combs, hair-pins, looking-glasses, all sorts and conditions of pins, hot and cold water, button-hooks, and everything else necessary for what is popularly known as 'a wash and brush-up.' Thus, rested, neat, and with a satisfactorily-appeased appetite, temper and appearance, both sadly out of order a short time before, return to their normal state.

Afterwards, there are the papers and magazines wherewith to beguile the time while waiting the arrival of a friend with whom one can share the delicious tea, freshly made, which revives both mind and body without revenging itself later upon the nerves, as long-made, 'cosy'-warmed tea invariably does.

Again, it is pleasant to have a place where parcels may be sent, where appointments can be made, and letters written, or telegrams thought out in quiet before being sent off. What mischief have carelessly-worded telegraphic despatches caused! and who could avoid errors when hastily penning the messages at a post office?

It is not only to ladies who reside

at some distance from town that clubs are a boon. Those who find it difficult to command privacy and freedom from interruption at their own home can secure them in the reading-room.

A lady has placed upon record her opinion that a woman who cannot write, or paint, or conduct her business, whatever it may be, amid the ceaseless interruptions of her household, cannot be much of stay or comfort to the members of her family. What a boon to such an one is a quiet hour at her club, whether devoted to reading, thinking, writing, or even to the commonplace items of her weekly accounts. Even given the valuable faculty of concentration, a double quantity of work can be accomplished in the same time, and with ease and pleasure, instead of difficulty and effort.

As to our social duties with regard to clubs, they need but little indication, being fairly self-evident. There is a widespread belief that old gentlemen secure for themselves all the available newspapers at their clubs, and sit on three or four while they are perusing one. I have never seen an old (or young) lady do so at any of our clubs. But I have witnessed (or shall I say 'heard') flagrant disregard paid to one point of good manners. Being shown over a club one day by the secretary, I heard an immense hubbub of talk and laughing going on in one

room, and the secretary, with a glitter of fun in her eyes, pointed to the inscription on the door. It ran thus:

Reading-Room. Silence is requested.

It was funny!

However, there are clubs where the rule of silence in the reading-room is better respected. Conversation is carried on, it is true, but only in whispers. It is odd, but true, that some people cannot whisper! When they lower their voices they actually make more noise and are rather more distinct than when they speak in ordinary fashion. One longs to say to them, 'Oh, do speak out!' There is a breathy harshness about their so-called whispers that is painful to the ear.

On the other hand, it is scarcely well-bred to talk in a kind of shout about one's private affairs, however interesting they may be, even in the rooms devoted to social intercourse and conversation. This is a very common fault among women just now. Nor is it confined to the classes that have enjoyed small opportunity for learning better things. I have heard a pretty young countess, born to the sphere in which she married, drown every voice in the vicinity with a loud discussion about the trimming of a gown.

A supercilious, arrogant demeanour is another rather common fault. *Punch* once described the behaviour of some navvies on seeing an

unknown individual approach their party:

"'E's a stranger. Let's 'eave 'arf a brick at 'im!'

Can there be any affinity between the mental attitude of the typical navvy and that of some of the best-born women in the land? There evidently is. Though they do not heave half bricks at anyone, they bestow upon strangers a cold look of dislike, with a limp interrogation in it. Sometimes the glance is almost malignant. Why?

A very lovely girl walked into a ladies' club one afternoon when the large tea-room was full. As she passed, a few looked admiringly at her, but the majority favoured her with the above-described chill, disparaging look, while in a few it became an absolute scowl.

Why?

XIII

THE ETIQUETTE OF MOURNING

'ETIQUETTE of mourning!' some may say. 'What a ridiculous expression!' And indeed it seems so. What on earth have grief and etiquette to do with each other?

At first sight, not much. On afterthoughts more than a little. Our social code is in many ways a kindly one, and has been drawn up as a result of long experience in the ways of the world. There is an etiquette of mourning, and one that does its utmost, in times of bereavement, to protect the mourner.

The very wearing of crape is, in itself, an announcement that the sanctity of grief should not be invaded. From this point of view, it is almost to be regretted that black has become so universally adopted in dress, apart from mourning. The signification once inseparable from a black costume is now wholly lost, and for this reason the use of crape becomes almost imperative where the true sorrow of loss is concerned. Otherwise, it is impossible to tell if a wholly black costume means merely a choice of that sombre hue or mourn-

ing garb. Etiquette, in this instance a kindly guide, does not exact the great quantities of crape that once were lavished on gowns. On the contrary, the trimming is limited to a little on the bodice and a few lines on the skirt. Even the smallest proportion of crape tells its own tale, and it is wholly unnecessary to crowd it on in superfluous quantities.

This it was that caused the reaction against it; for reaction there is; but true mourners find that without it they are at the mercy of rash inquiries, kindly meant but very difficult to receive with calmness.

When, after an illness, a relative dies, it is usual for the survivors to wire or write and acquaint all absent members of the family with the news. Sometimes all this sombre duty devolves upon a girl. Immediately that the day, hour, and place for the funeral are arranged, they are again communicated with, so that no one may complain that he or she has been left unacquainted with the arrangements.

Invitations are sometimes sent out; but it is the more usual way to despatch an intimation of the time and place to all near friends, who can attend or not as they choose. The day, hour and place of burial are sometimes announced in the papers, a copy being marked and sent to any friend who might wish to attend.

All these little things have to be

thought of and attended to in the first dismal days that follow bereavement. It seems hard to have to attend to such matters. How trivial they seem at such a time! But perhaps it is as well that the mourners should have some occupation. It prevents them from dwelling, every minute of the day, on their loss.

After the funeral, when the family feels that it can with some amount of composure face the world again, the letters of condolence have to be answered. Cards, with 'Thanks for kind sympathy,' are sometimes sent, or letters are written. Either is accepted as an intimation that the family may be called upon.

The duties of the outside world to mourners are numerous and often neglected. There is no doubt that they are difficult. A letter of condolence is a heavy task.

Very few can accomplish it satisfactorily. It should not be very long and ought not to be very short. In fact, it is easier to describe it in negatives than in any other way. In such a letter it is a great mistake to ask a single question. This implies that a reply is expected, and no such inference should be suggested at such a time. To express deep sympathy with a bereaved person and then to ask what the lost relative died of amounts simply to a contradiction in terms. If one is truly sympathetic, one does not do such things.

Suppose that, on receiving information about a death, one were to write and ask one of the mourners to send 'full particulars,' would this be a piece of true courtesy? On the contrary, it would be an egregious error in taste. The really kind friend decides to wait till a more convenient season for 'full particulars,' always hard to write of in times of loss.

When invitations are sent out to a funeral there should be wine and sandwiches and biscuits provided at the house from which the funeral is to start.

The friends do not return to the house afterwards. There is no set lunch as once there used to be. This is much better for all parties. In the old days there was a regular luncheon after the funeral, and before the will, if any, was read.

Now, the refreshments are of the simplest character, and there is seldom a sit-down luncheon, unless the home of the deceased relative should happen to be in a lonely country spot, far away from any hotel or available refreshments.

It is always a good rule to keep away as much as possible from the relatives on the day of a funeral.

The effort on their part to maintain composure is always more or less tried by the sight of sympathising friends.

In calling for the first time on a family that has lost a member by death, no allusion whatever should be

made to the loss, unless one of the members of the family should refer to the subject. In the same way, if one meets an acquaintance who is in deep mourning, no remark should be made about it. It might be thought the sympathetic thing to do, but a moment's thought would show us that any observation calculated to elicit explanations must be very trying to the wearer of deep mourning.

The true essence of good manners consists in thinking out what we ourselves should feel or would like on every occasion, and then practically applying the result arrived at to our communications with others. This is the golden rule for our dealings with each other: 'Do unto others what ye would they should do unto you.'

This includes the whole code of manners from great things to small.

For visits of condolence the dress should not be bright and gay. It need not be mourning, but should be dark in colour and quiet in character. Dances, entertainments, theatres, etc., should not be made a subject of conversation; nor should anyone expatiate on their happiness when calling on afflicted friends.

Many use mourning paper in writing letters of condolence; and also there are many who don slight mourning to pay a visit of condolence.

Mourning should always be worn at a funeral, even if the friend is not a relative or connection. I have heard

of ladies attending a funeral in coloured costume, but to do so is in very bad taste. It would be far better to stay away.

At public funerals, all who are invited to Westminster Abbey or St Paul's are requested to wear mourning. If this is the rule in official cases, how much more should it be so in private life!

XIV

ODDS AND ENDS

IN this, my last chapter, I want to say several little things of small odds and ends that have not seemed to fit themselves comfortably in any other place.

For instance, we have had no word of love and that most beautiful time of life between the engagement and the marriage. There are many who think that girls should never be spoken to about such things.

We ought, they think, to talk the young things down as though there were no real romance or poetry in the whole wide world. Have we forgotten that once upon a time they were everything to us?

What a commonplace, everyday sort of thing life would seem to the girl of seventeen if there were no romance in it!

But it is full of it, and hearts that keep young never lose sight of it, even when the bodies that contain them are thatched with grey.

Love is not a trifle, an imaginary thing, a thistledown to be blown down with the wind. It is real. It is part

of the life of every normal human being. Every girl has an impulse towards it, even if life denies her the golden tide of it, full and strong. The time of her youth is set to its rhythmic waves. Her heart dances to it, and she sets her daily walk, of business or of pleasure, to the theme.

It is true the theme varies in character with the girl, and there are many varieties of Girl. But that would be an endless subject, one upon whose vastness we dare not enter now. But, whether it be a gavotte, a symphony, an epic, an idyll, or merely a waltz, love is a Fact, and as such should be treated by the elders.

Happy, indeed, is the girl who can reckon upon the sympathy of a mother when the time comes for her to experience the rush of feeling that almost carries her away. There is little need of words between the two. And it is well. For there is a desecration in too much talk about what is so deeply felt. Girls are, as a rule, too fond of 'talking it over.' There are exceptions, to be sure. Some girls 'ponder these things in their hearts,' and would feel it a sort of treachery to speak of them.

Other girls chatter about everything, vulgarising what might be almost divine, hopelessly dragging down to commonplace all that should be spiritual, contemplative, apart.

I have even known a girl who circulated among her friends the letters

she received from her very devoted *fiancé*—Nemesis forgot her limp on that occasion! Smartly did she step up. The *fiancé* heard about it, broke off his engagement, and eventually married one of the girls who had been offered his letters to read, but had declined with a blush of surprised horror.

This 'talking over' takes the bloom off the petals of the lovely flower of love. And the girl who is sweet and true at heart feels instinctively that it is so.

Mothers should warn their girls against that ignoble and most contemptible being 'the male flirt,' the man whose chief amusement it is to pay court to girlish hearts, win them if he can, and when he has won them to throw them away. He has the knack of appearing sincere, of throwing himself heart and soul into the game while it lasts. Perhaps he does really feel the joy that lies in pursuit, the rush and excitement of the sportsman. But, however that may be, he has the air of sincerity. It is part of his equipment for his weak, unmanly *rôle*.

Perhaps one of the best ways of detecting him is by the glib readiness of his compliments. He seems to have a large assortment always ready, like boxes of bonbons in a sweet-stuff shop. He often embarrasses inexperienced girls with these utterances of his. A girl finds it a little difficult

to parry a compliment. She would not for the world appear to take it for more than it is worth, and yet her good breeding forbids her to reject it with anything like *brusquerie* or incivility. After a while she learns to pass it off with a little nod and smile. At first the ready response of a blush is vouchsafed, far too full and rich an answer to an empty remark. The man accepts the blush as a tribute to himself. The girl knows well that it is nothing but the result of a little puzzled awkwardness.

Girls are so liable to misconstruction. If they look at themselves in the glass someone cries out, 'Oh, Miss Vanity!' But it is not always vanity that impels the action. It is curiosity—a very natural curiosity, and one that grown-ups almost invariably ignore. Why should not the mother of a good-looking daughter tell the girl that she is endowed with a fair share of attractiveness?

'Where is the use of the lips' red charm,
The heaven of hair, the pride of the brow,
And the blood that blues the inside arm—
Unless we turn, as the soul knows how,
The earthly gift to an end divine?'

Great beauty is rare. Fortunately, too, for it is a gift that carries an awful responsibility with it. And how often have we noticed that the beautiful faces wear a look of sullen discontent! They seem to expect of the world at large more than it is

willing to grant even to superb loveliness.

Sensibly brought up girls are among the first to pity the butterflies of Society whose lives are empty of anything beyond the mere husks of existence. Their mothers bring them up for externals, without a thought beyond the petty triumphs of a passing hour. They are carefully trained to dance, to walk gracefully, to chatter about nothings, to speak French fluently, to avoid Detrimentals and cultivate Eligibles, and in all ways comport themselves as runners in the great social race after an Establishment; in other words, a good match. They are never told anything about duty, the mind, the heart, romance, the affections, all of which are the very essence of existence. Life is shown to them as a plaything, not a splendid gift to be made the most of. Time is a thing to 'kill, not to profitably use.

When the dark days come, they have no strength to bear them. They yield at once to the miserable weakness of self-pity. Without moral fibre, they have no stamina, and unless they can lean on someone they fall helplessly a prey to sorrow and misfortune. The poor butterflies!

The lessons they could almost unconsciously have imbibed in the quiet hours at home, when the girl is emerging from girlhood and taking up her troubled inheritance of

womanhood, they have now to be taught with whips and scorpions.

O, cruel self-indulgence of parents, that postpones the inevitable lesson until the halcyon days of youth are past!

And another little word to girls deals with a rather difficult subject. 'How,' asks one of them, 'am I to help being self-conscious when the very fact of wishing not to be so proves that I am so?' To think of it as little as possible is the only plan. We all know what it is to withdraw our thoughts with a rush from some topic on which we prefer that they should not dwell. Let us use this power of will to withdraw them from ourselves as much as possible.

There are so many delightful things for us all to think of outside our own little boundaries. It seems a waste to dwell within when we may fare forth, send our thoughts abroad into the universe, drink deeply of learning, soar high above the commonplace, everyday affairs of life, and sometimes even succeed in forgetting, for a short while, that we have a body, that troublesome but occasionally very acceptable incumbrance.

What does the Scottish poet say?

'A body's sel's the sairest welcht.'

THE END

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